DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 317 473 SO 020 681

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TITLE German History. A Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's Prize.
INSTITUTION Inter Nationes, Bonn (West Germany).
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 101p.; Translated by Brangwyn Jones.
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Translations (170)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Archives; *Awards; Competition; *Discovery Learning; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Historiography; History; *Local History; Oral History; Presidents; Social Studies; *Student Projects; *Student Research
IDENTIFIERS *German History; West Germany

ABSTRACT

The Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's German History Prize is one of the many youth competitions held every year in West Germany and sponsored by government offices, industries, common interest groups, and foundations. In this competition, which draws over 1,000 entries from all age groups, participants are expected to make an original relevant contribution to German history. Prizes are awarded in the form of large and small sums of money, books, and trips. The primary objective of the series is to promote democratic traditions and political participation among young people by encouraging them to explore German history, particularly from local and regional perspectives. Focusing on a different topic or question each time, the competition stresses exploratory learning, or learning by discovery, and demands a higher level of autonomy on the part of participants. Participants develop individual or group projects often under the guidance of teachers or other adult experts who act as tutors. Competitors conduct on-site research, interview people, find newspaper articles, documents, publications, old photos, family papers, and use other archival materials in their projects. The final presentations are in a variety of forms including books, collages, exhibitions, and video documentations. Entries are judged by jury, prizes are awarded, and resumes of the prize winning projects published for each competition are distributed throughout the country. The competitions are valuable not only in developing historical skills and understanding in young people, but also in preparing the way for future studies by historians. (AS)

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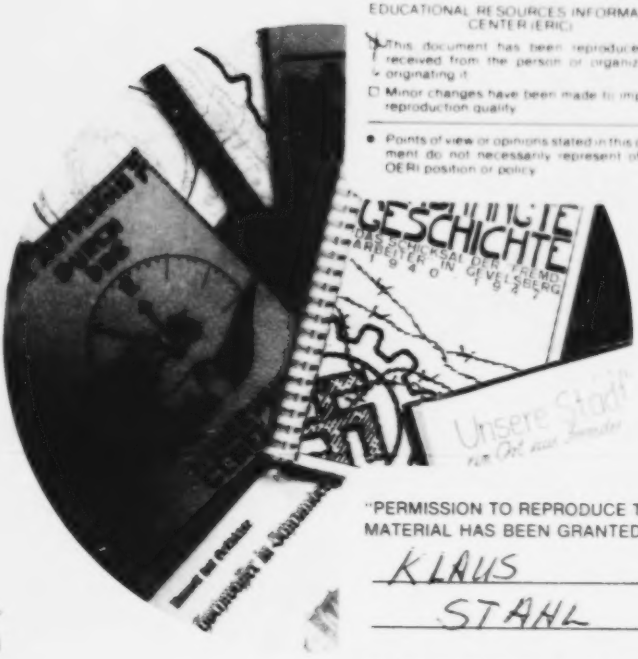

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German History

A Pupils' Competition
for the
Federal President's Prize

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There is a very large number of competitions for young persons in the Federal Republic of Germany; they take place at federal, regional and local level. They are sponsored by government offices, industrial enterprises, groups with common interests or foundations. They concern music and art, science and literature, sport and technology, handicraft and industry, etc. A smaller number of these competitions specifically serve the promotion of an "elite", of outstanding achievements in early childhood and youth. This minority of highly esteemed competitions represents the "crème de la crème", such as "Youth trains for the Olympic Games" (sport), "Youth researches" (science), "Youth makes Music" (music), etc. The "Pupil's Competition for the Federal President's German History Prize" also belongs to this illustrious circle.

The competition's aim is to intensify, to differentiate, to revise the history culture of the Federal Republic of Germany, to orient it towards democratic traditions, current problems, humane shaping of the future, and outstanding deficits. For this reason, it is important for the pupils' competition to be an omnipresent institution, organizing exhibitions and press conferences, producing books and magazines. It is even more important, though, for these young persons – prizewinners and non-prizewinners alike – to take part themselves in public and informal debate at all levels (federal, state and local, publicistics, political parties and associations, university, school and firm). In doing so, the highly gifted top prizewinners can take on symbolic and model functions – but not take the work off other people's shoulders.

German History

A Pupils' Competition
for the
Federal President's Prize

by

Bodo von Borries

1989 INTER NATIONES Bonn

Translation: Brangwyn Jones

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Illustrations: Körber Stiftung, Hamburg
Layout: Stefan Röhl
Production: SDV Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag GmbH, Saarbrücken
Printed in the Federal Republic of Germany

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1 A type of strange periodic illness?

In the late summer of every second year, around September, a strange illness seems to befall many thousands of young West Germans. Pupils of all age groups suddenly start questioning parents, grandparents, and neighbours, hurry off to public libraries, make enquiries at public offices, schools, and churches, search through family papers and photo albums in attics and cellars, browse through newspapers of ancient vintage in publishers' archives, plague officials at municipal and state libraries with numerous requests for information. Time and again, they forge and alter their plans, together with their history teachers, share the work out, painstakingly organize their list of appointments and visits to archives and persons they want to interview, and coordinate, as best as they can, their hobby commitments with their scholastic obligations.

Many have given up by Christmas; many others, however, are by now scarcely able to emerge from their feverish activity. They are busy copying, reading, checking, deciphering handwriting, discussing, drafting, taking photos, making interviews, classifying, corresponding, arranging, writing things down, correcting, making fair copies, duplicating, having things bound. In late February, the nights grow long and then – usually at the last minute – everything is despatched by post. The pupils droop with exhaustion. In the space of a few days, however, hundreds of parcels with over 1,000 entries from all corners of the Federal Republic of Germany start piling up at one sole address in Hamburg. The pupils now turn their attention to their normal chores once more, catch up on neglected school work and wait, and wait for months. . .

Following this first conspicuous outbreak of illness, peace seems to return; in reality, it is only a sort of incubation period. The hectic activity now becomes invisible and totally shifts to smaller groups. In Hamburg the fruits of the pupils' labours are registered, sorted, and then forwarded by post once more to major cities in different parts of the country.

Five of the more than 12,000 projects on local history – submitted by children and young persons

There, experienced teachers and qualified academics concern themselves with the pupils' products, analyze, compare, and assess them. The large piles then make their way back to Hamburg. In midsummer a jury of 15 specialists brood night and day for a whole week, reading, reading, reading, comparing, assessing, talking themselves blue in the face – before making their final decisions in strict secrecy.

The anxious period of waiting eventually comes to an end in September. A lucky few are invited to Bonn by the Federal President. At an official ceremony, individuals, groups, or classes are awarded the five first prizes, and the most successful school the Federal President's school prize. At the same time, thousands of letters are despatched to all corners of the country to other competitors, winners of larger and smaller money-prizes, winners of surprise prizes, and non-prizewinners. Over 400 entries – almost half of those submitted – receive prizes in the shape of money, books, trips or surprise gifts. Many young persons are disappointed, many happy. This is where the media enter the scene.

Press, radio, and television not only report federal-wide on the prize-giving in Bonn; first and foremost, the local press and regional radio stations devote their attention to the respective prizewinners in their vicinity and province. Education and cultural affairs ministers receive the prizewinners in their particular Bundesland (constituent state) and distribute additional tokens of appreciation, mayors honour the best achievements in their respective municipalities. But it is not all joy: there is occasional annoyance, too. Pupils call for a memorial for the forgotten victims of former crimes, they point to unclarified environmental pollution by industrial firms, they demand the conservation of historically valuable buildings, they unearth cases of hostility towards foreigners, or they protest the chicanery practised on Roma and Sinti. . .

It is only at this third stage that the epidemic reaches fellow humans. Local initiatives organize public exhibitions on the strength of research work; prizewinners travel abroad and

The Federal President's prize-awarding ceremony – not only a big day for a handful of carefully selected outstanding prizewinners but also for journalists and camera teams from all over the Federal Republic of Germany

meet statesmen or young persons interested in similar topics. Associations concerned with local history and culture and minor publishers print the best works in book-form. Magazines concern themselves with particularly moving findings, the attention of history scholars is drawn to hitherto overlooked research subjects. The permanent staff in Hamburg select a number of graphic contributions for a lavishly-illustrated and comprehensible magazine entitled "Spuren suchen" (Seeking traces). Regional competitions often follow on. The questions chosen and their current significance remain much more alive for some time in the society and culture of the Federal Republic of Germany than they would have without the "infectious illness in pupil circles". . .

Whilst this public debate and snowball-like effect are still going on, a fourth phase of the illness takes place secretly again. A new variety of the germ is cultured; a team of experts seek new topics to be set. A group of prominent public figures discuss and decide on the next subject to be tackled. The agreement and support of the education ministers, responsible for schools, is sought. The permanent staff and a group of academic experts prepare the details; after all, the topic has to be equally comprehensible, stimulating and solvable for all – from Class 3 pupils to 20-year-old students or trainees. In order to provide as many ideas as possible to encourage participation in the competition, a further edition of "Spuren suchen" – dealing this time with the new topic – is published and distributed in large numbers at the beginning of September. Once more the strange infection seems to befall thousands and thousands of young West Germans. . .

Who is the pathogen of this periodic epidemic? The President of the Federal Republic himself – together with Hamburg donor Kurt A. Körber – challenges young people's hunting fever to track down historical documents and correlations and rewards those who are most severely and successfully addicted to work fever. The germs are called historical curiosity and the urge to discover, testing oneself and personal ambition. What seems highly strange and incomprehensible

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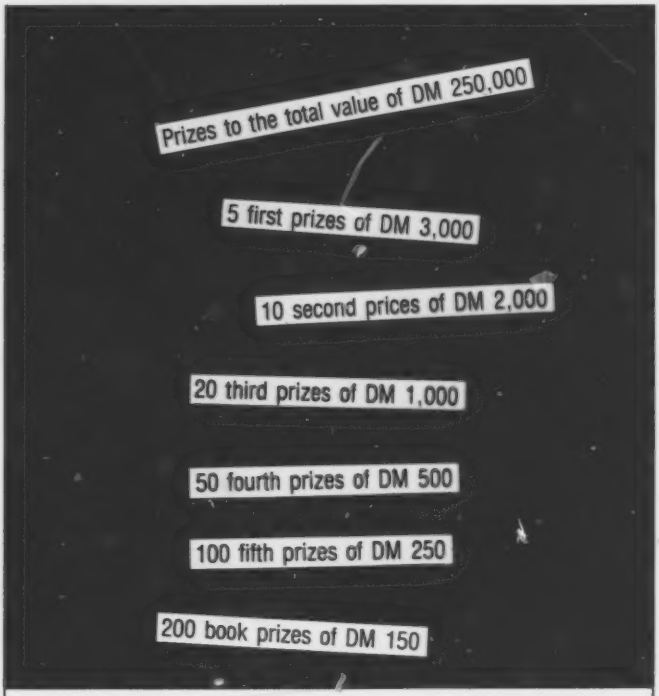
Prizes to the total value of DM 250,000
5 first prizes of DM 3,000
10 second prices of DM 2,000
20 third prizes of DM 1,000
50 fourth prizes of DM 500
100 fifth prizes of DM 250
200 book prizes of DM 150

Additional surprise prizes for primary school and junior entries (up to Class 8) to the total value of DM 5,000. The Federal President's School Prize worth DM 5,000 for the most-successful school. Additional prizes in the form of trips to European cities. Presentation ceremony in honour of the regional winners and reception by the Federal President for the first-prize winners. Prizewinners interested in journalism may apply for a Herbert-Weichmann-scholarship. Leading prizewinners (1st to 3rd prize) may be admitted to and sponsored by the Studies Foundation of the German People in a special selection procedure. There are many additional prizes from the Länder and communities.

outwardly, from a distance, is – viewed inwardly – one of the most fascinating and liveliest pieces of West German historical culture. The "Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's German History Prize" has now been in existence for 15 years and has good prospects of growing twice as old.

2 Requirements and objectives

A long-term, ambitious, and expensive undertaking, such as the pupils' competition, has a – more or less formulated – "philosophy", a structure of aims and values. These have partly taken shape more clearly with the passing of time and were partly determinative from the beginning. The objectives are extremely demanding – critics even consider them megalomaniacal and insoluble. Consequently, a more detailed and systematic explanation of the main outlines is essential.

2.1 Democratic tradition and political participation

Democratic behaviour and courageous commitment in regard to social duties must be particularly promoted in all countries, must have a sound, historical foundation and be learnt in practice. The example offered by the adult generation and the political system, provided the latter is exemplary, may well be the most important guide for youth. No society, however, can bank on the fact that young persons will adopt pluralistic convictions and democratic procedures without problem. In view of its historical experiences, special efforts are not only

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History research pays off – and not just because of the more than 400 prizes

considered necessary in the Federal Republic; they are also made.

Parliamentary democracy did not establish itself under its own steam in Germany through slow reforms or revolutionary upheaval. The monarchy was abolished in 1918/19 when military defeat became obvious and it was supposed the victors of World War I would impose milder peace terms on a parliamentary government than they would on the loathed authoritarian system. In 1945, indeed, the new state form resulted from "unconditional surrender" and at the behest of the Occupying Powers. "Belated nation", "inadequate civic sense", "lost opportunity of revolution", and "the special German path" have been passionately discussed, disputed, confirmed, substantiated or accepted as inexplicable time and again in publications and academic circles.

The philosophy of the pupils' competition includes a reduction of a possible present-day deficit in democratic substance and tradition by exploring the history of former liberation movements and democratic trends – as well as their opposing forces and obstacles. It is by no means a foregone conclusion that there were no relevant "emancipatory endeavours" and "civic emergences" in Germany. The undeniable absence of success in this field at pan-state level does not imply a lack or historical irrelevance. Societies and their sub-groups can quite well identify themselves with traditions which (initially) seem to have been abortive.

No-one would deny Poland its right to constitution and nation simply because constitution and unity were lost through military intervention by more powerful neighbours in 1791/93. The history of the independent republics of Peru and Bolivia would be unthinkable without the uprising by Tupac Amarus II against Spain in 1780/81. Although the attempt by the "Carbonari" to establish a free, united Italy failed in the 19th century, and they languished in the dungeons of foreign rulers, they are nevertheless firmly anchored in Italian historical consciousness. What is verifiable in the case of national liberation movements throughout the world, also applies – to

a lesser degree – to social reform movements and revolutionary parties.

In other words, vanquished and downtrodden traditions are not refuted, historically "dismissed": they preserve a progressive potential and deserve to be "well taken care of". Particularly the defeats of the past, the unresolved utopias of life worthy of man, the still open attempts to mould a rational and humane society can provide incentive for the future. This has been called the still unsettled "future of the past". It goes without saying that bitter defeats – unlike triumphant victories – are not automatically imprinted on historical consciousness. First and foremost, they remain initial failures, ever-present tests of a subsequent victorious tradition. In other words, they are recalled as a time of struggle full of sacrifices and glory. A national or social victory would not seem to be of such value in the eyes of the successful if it were easily achieved and not acquired by exertion and losses.

Even movements which are not yet victorious but have an assured future can build past catastrophes into their historical consciousness as exhortations. "Beaten, we return home. But our grandchildren will fare better in the fight." All one has to do is to recall the almost 2000-year-old hopes cherished by the scattered and persecuted Jews of returning to Jerusalem. The same is true of the peace movements of our time. The fact that war and suppression have still not been overcome does not form an obstacle to intensive studying of former attempts to secure peace and arms control and to adopt their achievements – not their weaknesses – as one's own model.

In the case of democratic traditions in Germany, the situation is more complicated since democracy has not triumphed under its own steam – but is no longer unredeemed. In other words, here, it is a matter of tracing the level of democracy and participation, achieved in a detailed and critical manner, back to its native roots and examining its possible supplementation and realization. To this end, at a superficial glance, only a few themes seem suitable: apart from the revolutions in 1848/49 and 1918/19, possibly the Peasants' Revolt of

The image of tradition which appears meaningful to me was once described thus by Frenchman Jean Jaurès, an opponent of war who was murdered in 1914:

> *Do not preserve the ashes,*
> *Keep the flame burning*

But which flame? And in which sense? That should always be the subject. I believe we have a dormant treasure of events which deserve to be brought to light and anchored much more strongly in the consciousness of our people.

For some years I have made it a habit, whenever I visit rural districts and cities in our country, to try and find out, on the basis of chronicles and church registers, what there has been in the way of libertarian movements or even local uprisings in the various parts of our fatherland. What one finds in the extensive production of municipal chronicles and the like, however, is astonishingly meagre. In this connection, my interest is not only focused on the forerunners or ramifications of the 1848/49 Revolution, such as the Hambach Festival of 1832 or the battles at the barricades in Elberfeld or around Rastatt during the Baden rebellion of 1849 in which – which will explain my interest – men belonging to the generation of my mother's great-grand-father were involved. Fortunately, there were quite a few men and women in Germany long before 1848 who were libertarian and socially-minded, even whole groups and classes who were not willing to accept the patronizing rulers. I recall here, for instance, the Stedingen peasants who were eventually defeated by the Archbishop of Bremen in 1234. Or the 'Salpeterer' who, in the first half of the 18th century, fought for their peasant freedom in uprisings in the Hotzenwald near Säckingen, and Waldshut in the southern Black Forest, particularly against the prince-abbot of St. Blasien, until their leaders were exiled to Hungary by the Emperor of Austria. The Emperor of Austria wanted to force them, inter alia, to surrender their stable manure to him in order to obtain saltpetre for guncotton for his wars. To me it seems characteristic of our lack of historical consciousness that the inhabitants of the southern Black Forest know as good as nothing about the saltpetre battles – even though they must have taken place literally outside their own farm gates and, in some cases, their own forefathers were involved. Yet these events should mean much more to them than the wars waged by emperors and kings to expand their power.

It is hardly fitting, I feel, if a democratic society still regards rebellious peasants as nothing more than mutinous mobs which were quickly contained and put in their place by the authorities. This is the way the

victors presented history. It is high time that a libertarian, democratic Germany rewrites our history – right down to school textbooks.

(Extract from a speech given by Gustav Heinemann on 13. 2. 1970)

'Discovering libertarian, democratic traditions in history' – one of the ideas for the setting up of the pupils' competition

1524/26, the autonomy of the cities in the Middle Ages or the resistance to the domination of "National Socialism" between 1933 and 1945.

Such considerations, however, would be restricted and confined to political domination and the all-state level. Humane models of social life are sought after and fought for, implemented and realized in less conspicuous places. Democratic consciousness and political involvement today could also set their sights, in particular, on "Women's lives and women's movements", "Persecution of minorities and integration of minorities" (e.g. Jews, foreigners, persons of a different faith, wayfarers), "Social assistance and poor-law", "Childhood and youth" – and many such topics. It was realized at an early stage in the pupils' competition: "The private sphere is political, too"; major politics start on a small scale.

Anyone interested in promoting "democratic consciousness" and "political participation" must also take into account the (seemingly unpolitical) areas of the daily round, work and immediate groups of "average people" because it is there that the behaviour patterns, and life's opportunities are intensively moulded, where character structures and capacities to act originate – all of which can be presupposed and exploited by (major) politics. In considering all this it is important to constantly see the correlation between the framework conditions and ways of life, on the one hand, and the social

movements and room for manoeuvre, on the other. The work, culture, and living standard of industrial workers, for example, cannot be looked at without the history of the trade unions and workers' parties (and vice-versa). Female ways of life and suppression must be directly linked with forms of resistance and women's movements.

An examination of the history of one's own society in the broadest sense (from seemingly "major" questions such as the constitution, foreign domination, and war to seemingly "minor" problems such as work, accomodation, and leisure time) reveals achievements and deficits, uncovers models often undiscovered hitherto, and unmasks as questionable, heroes who, on occasions, have been universally revered. It generates the emergence of future tasks and creative scope, conveys secondary experiences with reformative action, provides introduction to organizational conditions of political participation, illustrates resistance to be expected, teaches a sense of proportion in regard to the extent of and time needed for possible changes, prompts the recognition – and appreciation – of prevailing conditions as serious endeavours of human creativeness, confirms the value and need of compromise, exhorts passion and patience. . .

In the pupils' competition, however, democratic tradition and political participation are not only formal objectives: they are also practical methods. Anyone investigating history and testing historiography must undertake, shape and produce something independently, develop tenacity, and accept responsibility. This, in itself, is an important lesson in autonomy and competence which creates self-confidence and prepares one for political action. The acquired character virtues are transferable. In addition, personal research provides serious contacts to institutions, insight into administrative processes and peculiarities of public life, knowledge of political terminology and tactics, the skill to analyze political problems, etc., etc. In other words, the practical aspect of the pupils' competition is action-oriented, political education and effective familiarization with the tools of democracy. In this way, the second

main complex in the "Philosophy of the competition" is realized.

2.2 Explorative learning and historical project work

Highly diverse forms of learning have been recommended in the course of time for the acquisition of history. The memorizing of dates, rulers, battles, and constitutional organs is common practice – much to the dislike of pupils. It goes without saying that the advantage of a sound structure of names, dates, facts, and terms is not to be scoffed at. But the question is who lays down the criteria for the selection and whether the interpretive pattern concealed in the chosen selection of history can even be noticed and criticized. Perhaps even more dangerous is the recounting of colourful, adventurous – oftentimes fictional – stories of shining heroes and black-hearted villains in one's own national history or social tradition. This sort of classroom teaching undoubtedly generates enthusiasm and identification among younger pupils – but not understanding for the other side, tolerance, and love of peace.

With ever-growing resoluteness and increasing success, there have been endeavours in the Federal Republic since 1949 to realize a third basic model for the learning of history. This consists of the careful methodical processing of correlations and realizations using manifold, even contradictive materials, such as translated and abridged documents or contemporary utterances, reproduced pictures and photo features – as well as historical portrayals and specialized books, reconstructive outlines and models. In this process of "learning by discovery" or "learning by insight", it is a matter of independence, methodical preciseness, and reflection in regard to learning aim and learning path.

This is usually linked with the – justified – demand that pupils (on the basis of source material, for instance) should

Poster for the competition. Subject: Everyday Life under National Socialism – Living Accommodation in the Process of Change

carefully reflect on the opposing interests and viewpoints of the conflicting parties involved and discuss various modern interpretations. If the Crusades in the High Middle Ages are being dealt with in the classroom, for example, pupils should not immediately take sides with the Franconian knights. They

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should also refer to reports by (and thus ways of thinking of) Islamic, Jewish, or Byzantine authors, and – apart from the enthusiastic descriptions of the Crusades – should learn of the lamentations about the cruel massacres and the appeals for religious tolerance and international peace. Multi-perspipaciousness of this nature calls for empathy and understanding of others.

Furthermore, pupils are called upon to form their own opinion from the current viewpoint and to state one's personal reasons for taking sides – whilst simultaneously observing tolerance for other points of view. Controversial treatment in class can also include opposing judgements resulting from latest research. A demanding form of learning such as this is regarded by the relevant didactic experts in the Federal Republic of Germany as an appropriate exquisition of history for national and social groups who live in the "one world" of harsh contrasts as well as existential interdependences. People need both knowledge and further development of their respective traditions, as well as understanding for others and tolerance of foreign, formerly hostile traditions. In the final analysis, they need an arch of universalistic (i.e. cosmopolitan and human rights-oriented) moral principles: in this connection they must preserve and develop their identity.

As a rule, the pupils' competition is not concerned with radical clashes of various traditions; its demands on the understanding of others are, in most cases, of a more modest nature. Even so, its philosophy demands a level of autonomy in learning higher than that of the "learning process of insight and discovery". Pupils are supposed to seek their own particular subject from general topics such as "Everyday Life under National Socialism 1933-1939", "The Hitler Youth in our Town", or "From Unemployment to Rearmament taking a Firm as an Example. . ." True, they are supposed to read general descriptions as a background and interpretative framework, but first and foremost, do research on site, seek out witnesses of the time as interviewees, find newspaper articles, official documents, printed publications, old photos or familiy

papers, and take these as case studies of their respective subjects.

Formally, the result can be in the shape of a scientific representation with appended documents, a commentated collage, an exhibition, a video documentation, a feature, a source edition moderated by interpretations and transitions, or some other form. The basic requirement is that the project presents in detail something new and locally relevant, something not found before, things not seen in such correlation hitherto, information provided inadequately to that point, or information long forgotten. In this restricted sense, originality and a scientific approach are truly called for. The pupils' competition strives for – and occasionally achieves – research quality, but far more often it realizes independent rediscovery and new combinations. This may come as a surprise since the majority of the competitors are under 16 years of age. Anyone who can only picture science as experiments and archive studies by professors with long white beards or long white coats who, after many years of practice with highly specialized methods and precise instruments, come up with highly complex interpretations or extremely accurate measurements, can do nothing but smile about the "explorative learning" of 10-year-olds. It goes without saying that the reality of full-time research in no way tallies with such imagined models.

Conversely, anyone who regards research as the independent application of the mental faculties to unsolved problems in the daily round and the living world, who regards it as nothing more than a more pointed form of man's inquisitive, learning, and orientation behaviour, will not be surprised at children doing research. The original questioning attitude to the world (and to history, in particular) is taken up by the pupils' competition and disciplined methodically. Despite all respect for the historian's tools (source heuristics, source criticism, etc.), why shouldn't an 8th Class search through the school archives for documents, regulations, and reports from the Nazi era, or record on tape detailed conversations with

The visual presentation of many entries is just as impressive as the contents

their own grandparents on their school experiences during the Nazi regime and then finally describe the coinciding and conflicting points as they see them and their thoughts about the situation at that time and present-day judgements. This is "explorative learning" as intended by the pupils' competition.

It goes without saying that the activities of pupils engaged in "explorative learning" vary tremendously according to age. A Class 4, for instance, consisting of 9- to 10-year-olds, concerns itself much more with collecting, classifying, understanding, and reproducing material. In their case, various forms of hobby crafts, playing, assuming roles, creative work tend to predominate. Historical discernment is usually limited to the different nature of the situation at that time and the difficulties of personally breaking out of what was regarded as a matter of course in their environment. 18-year-olds in a Class 12, on the other hand, can be expected to adopt a critical approach to the material, particularly to its tendencies to conceal, to forget, play down, or become nostalgic. These

Evidence-seekers at work – personal research through interviews of eye-witnesses of the time or in archives are the order of the day – not school text-books

senior pupils then make comparative assessments and draw personal conclusions.

As a form of learning, "explorative learning" is not without precedent in the history of educational science. The early part of the 20th century saw the emergence of many such concepts and experiments in the international field of educational reform in almost all countries (such as Tolstoy in Russia, Freinet in France, Dewey in the USA, Key in Sweden, Neill in Great Britain, and Kerschensteiner in Germany). In this context, justice to children, independent activity, codetermination, and handicraft were often considered more important than the scientific exploration of the world; even slightly deviating concepts offer sufficient proof of the fact that "explorative learning" does not constitute a traditionless Utopia devoid of a sense of proportion.

The pupils' competition is designed for the scholastic and non-scholastic sectors. A senior girl pupil might tackle – with or without parental help – a project on "Environmental pollution of our district through a chemical works from 1890 to 1945", completely independent of her school. Five schoolgirls and boys can seek out their history or biology teacher as a tutor (supervisor, assistant) and, under his casual guidance, but in their leisure time outside school, investigate "The moor flora since the 19th century and the reasons for the decline in the variety of species". Last but not least, a female teacher may use all her history lessons for several months (maybe the German lessons as well) to tackle a project entitled "The fight for and against the bypass round our town 1955–1985" with her class. All three cases deal with "project method" in the history sector and with "explorative learning".

2.3 Local tie-up and universal correlation

If the subjects set for the pupils' competition were only concerned with central events and processes at federal (Bund) or federal state (Land) level, the central archives (Federal

Archives in Koblenz, Main State Archives in the state capitals, successor to the Reich Archives in Berlin, etc.) would be hopelessly swamped. The same would apply to possible interviewees. What is more, pupils in the large cities would have a major head start and advantage which others would never be able to catch up on. In other words, if only for pragmatic reasons, the subjects of investigation must be chosen on a much broader basis.

Didactical and factual-logical reasons are even more important. History is not only – not even primarily – what happens in critical situations in capitals, i.e. the decisions made by governments and parliaments as the case arises. History also includes the preconditions and consequences of these decisions in all conceivable places, the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows of the population and its sub-groups in each case, the (seemingly) prepolitical daily round. War and the prevention of war, for instance, nowadays would scarcely be examined as a purely governmental problem but more likely as war experience, readiness for war, or rejection of war on the part of those concerned.

Constitutive areas of history cannot be reconstructed in any way from government files and actions since they do not represent one single event but the summation of many individual processes which, to a large extent, take place independent of the state. The fundamental process of industrialization, for example, is not researchable in legislation or the executive but in regionally distributed individual processes. In other words, "industrialization", as such, is a highly abstract term which can only be formed or furnished with content on the basis of numerous local studies. This argument applies to all basic social processes, be they researchable through (statistical) details or through qualitative materials which only provide tangible evidence and may be generalized in their summation.

A state of tension and supplementation exists between questions and sectors which might be better investigated on the basis of central documents and those where countless local

investigations are an imperative prerequisite. State life and the normative side are, at least partly, ascertainable from "above". Even in political party life, the local structure is important. The daily round, mentality, and subjective experiences, on the other hand, can only be established decentrally and generalized cautiously. It is these sectors, in particular, which are indispensable for historical explanation and democratic action which effectively ascertain causalities, assess latitudes, and promote humanization. Even the "great" results of state politics can only be adequately described if – on a downward path – their dependence on provincial conditions, their reflection in local events, their effect through conversion and execution at regional level, their mental processing by ordinary people can be clarified in biographical correlation with everyday life and the world at large. On the "upward" path, global and generalized concepts of the historical process will be frequently confirmed and differentiated – as well as refuted and revised – through local studies.

It is obvious that the point of departure within the field of local history permits a much more extensive use of interviews and the "oral history" method. The realistic approach takes history and personal consternation back into the living world. That means that history no longer disregards ordinary people, does not – as is so often feared – remain a colourless, cultural possession of minorities, a pure instrument of power for the upper strata of society or useless knowledge for specialists. If, by necessity, history means the critical examination, acceptance, and revision of tradition, then the "dialogue between the generations" in form of countless intensive interviews in no way constitutes the lowliest of the pupils' competition's merits.

Projects with regional correlations or biographic relevance are, moreover, easier and of greater motivating quality for pupils. "The Environmental History of the German Reich, 1870–1914" would be virtually impossible to accomplish; restricting it to state environment policy would reduce the question to very narrow limits. But subjects such as "Changes

Schüler erforschten die Nazi-Zeit

Das kurze Leben des Soldaten Haas

Hier in Hamburg wird kaum jemand Karl Haas kennen, sich noch an ihn erinnern. Karl Haas kam 1921 in Dieburg auf die Welt und verließ sie schon 20 Jahre später wieder. In der Nähe von Kiew wurde er 1941 schwer verwundet, quälte sich noch drei Tage und starb am 16. Juli. Ein Zwanzigjähriger! Millionen Zwanzigjährige starben in jenen Jahren einen ähnlichen Tod.

Das viel zu kurze Leben des Karl Haas steht im Mittelpunkt einer der sechs Arbeiten, die im Schülerwettbewerb Deutsche Geschichte, ausgeschrieben von der Hamburger Kurt-A.-Körber-Stiftung, mit 1. Preis ausgezeichnet und [illegible]

waltsamer Tod beherrschten den Alltag des Nationalsozialismus. 13 000 Schülerinnen und Schüler – dreimal so viele wie im Vorjahr – untersuchten diesen Alltag, sie reichten insgesamt 2172 Arbeiten ein, für die die Körber-Stiftung Preise im Gesamtwert von 370 000 Mark ausschüttete.

Bei ihren Recherchen machten die Elf- bis 21jährigen Schüler aber auch bittere Erfahrungen. Viele der Älteren, die sie befragten, wollten „von früher nichts mehr wissen", meinten, man soll „nun endlich aufhören, in der Vergangenheit [illegible] kramen". Bei der [illegible] der Villa Ham-

feindlichkeit gegen türkische Nachbarn erkennen lassen. Körber: „In diesem Sinne sind die Erfahrungen, die meine Generation im NS-Reich gemacht hat, zu teuer bezahlt worden, als daß nicht jede Generation sie neu aufarbeiten und Lehren für das eigene Handeln daraus ziehen sollte."

Neben Peter Blümler erhielten 1. Preise in Höhe von je 3000 Mark: Michael Brenner aus Weiden (Oberpfalz), der die Judenverfolgung im Dritten Reich in seiner Heimatgemeinde beschrieb; 20 Berufsschü[illegible] Wiesau (Oberpfalz) für [illegible]ung darüber, w[illegible] in ihrer

Things really get going after the presentation of the awards: local newspapers and radio stations gladly give full coverage of the prizewinners in their region. (Hamburger Abendblatt 3-11-81)

Pupils investigate the Nazi era

The short life of Private Haas

Hardly anyone here in Hamburg will know Karl Haas, let alone remember him. Karl Haas entered this world in Dieburg in 1921 and left it 20 short years later. He was badly wounded near Kiev in 1941, suffered for a further three days and died on 16 July. He was only 20 years old! Millions of 20-year-olds died a similar death in those years.

The very short life of Karl Haas is the focal point of one of the six entries submitted for the Pupils' German History Competition run by the Kurt A. Körber Foundation in Hamburg which were awarded one of the first prizes and were honoured by Federal President Karl Carstens. 'Everyday Life under National Socialism' was the topic this time for the competition which the Hamburg industrialist founded jointly with Gustav Heinemann, the then Federal President, in 1973.

Why Karl Haas in particular? His 16-year-old great-nephew Peter Blumler, from Bischofsheim, explored his uncle's very short life and found evidence to show how children were captivated by an idea at that time. He then logically entitled his project: 'A Life for a Great Idea' – an idea, however, which turned out to be criminal deceit for all Germans.

Deceit, persecution, lack of rights, spied on, brutality towards dissenters and violent death dominated everyday life under National Socialism. 13,000 pupils – three times as many as last year – examined this daily round, they submitted in all 2,172 entries for which the Körber Foundation offered prizes to the total value of DM 370,000.

During their research work, however, the 11 to 21-year-olds had bitter experiences. Many of the elderly people they interviewed 'didn't want to have anything more to do with former times' and felt 'there should now be an end to rummaging in the past'. At the prize-giving ceremony at Villa Hammerschmidt in Bonn, Kurt A. Körber thus praised the young persons for the fact that they had not asked reproachingly: 'But how could you do that ?!' but had conducted their investigations with great sensitivity when trying to find out how was it possible that so many citizens had been both victims and henchmen of a regime. He quoted one pupil:

'After my talks with my grandfather, I learned how difficult it is to pass moral judgement and how easy it is to utter moral condemnation; how difficult it is to differentiate, how easy it is to generalize.'

Körber also drew an important conclusion for the present time when he pointed out that many young persons tackling the question of the persecution of the Jews were also displaying growing hostility towards Turkish neighbours. Körber: 'In this sense, the experiences which my generation gained from the Nazi Reich were paid for too dearly, so that every generation should assimilate them anew and seek out lessons for its own actions.'

In addition to Peter Blumler, first prizes worth DM 3,000 were awarded to: Michael Brenner from Weiden (Upper Palatinate), who described the persecution of the Jews in his local community during the Third Reich; 28 vocational school students from Wiesau (Upper Palatinate) for their research into how the National Socialists won over the youth in their area; Andreas Hofmann from Witten, who produced evidence to show how an opposition clergyman was persecuted; 25 pupils from a main school in Dortmund-Schuren, who investigated everyday life under the Nazis in their town; Klaus van Eickels from Kleve whose focal point was everyday life in school.

A competition which now belongs to the past? Perhaps it would be better to heed the reflections of a 15-year-old boy at a Gymnasium: 'One thing that puzzles me considerably is: Why do academics make such little use of sources they can find in people's homes. These people also have a history. At any rate, I found many things of interest.'

in the Water Supply in our Town" or "The Canalization of the Upper Rhine" can be tackled on the basis of local material, and remain for the locality, the native environment of the researchers, relevant and topical. "National Socialism" or "The Postwar Era" are abstract projects of an unwieldy nature. But "The Biography of my Uncle who fell in the War" or "The Flight of my Family from East Prussia and their Integration into Westphalia" are regional or socio-biographical concretizations which are manageable.

Unfortunately, the question about the typical and the possible generalization of the individual cases investigated is often asked less intensively than is desirable. This, however, tends to be more of an indication of the necessity of local reference and access to the living world. Competitors confronted with geographically and thematically overlapping topics produce, at best, a treatise based on scientific literature; regional studies, on the other hand, particularly if they are presented from all parts of the Federal Republic simultaneously, offer excellent comparative material for continuation. Consequently, one can optimistically argue that synthetic studies on the basis of material collected by pupils would be highly rewarding. The competitors have at least explored what is available at local archives and to be gleaned from asking questions. In this way, they have prepared the ground for specifically accentuated or more broadly-based, comparative investigations; in other words, they provide impulses and the saving of time for future projects.

2.4 Original promotion of highly talented persons and sound work on a broad scale

As a matter of course, the pupils' competition regards itself as a challenge to competitive spirit and supreme achievement. Apart from increased insight and self-confidence, reward is also forthcoming in the shape of money prizes, journeys, and

honour. There is no procedure by which every competitor is automatically a winner – as seems to be the case in some other competitions. A future democratic and humane society will *also* (and not *only*) be a meritocracy in which all profit from the special exertions and findings of outstanding individuals and small groups. Enhanced commitment and deeper penetration, a more resourceful and original approach to the investigation of local history should also be rewarding. Those whose projects are less successful need not be ashamed – but they shouldn't be given special mention either.

There is a very large number of competitions for young persons in the Federal Republic of Germany; they take place at federal, regional, and local level. They are sponsored by government offices, industrial enterprises, groups with common interests, or foundations. They concern music and art, science and literature, sport and technology, handicraft and industry, etc. A smaller number of these competitions specifically serve the promotion of an "elite", of outstanding achievements in early childhood and youth. This minority of highly esteemed competitions represents the "crème de la crème", such as "Youth trains for the Olympic Games" (sport), "Youth researches" (science), "Youth makes Music" (music), etc. The "Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's German History Prize" also belongs to this illustrious circle.

The sheer quantity of contests creates keen competition between the various contests, e.g. in respect of public attention and the will to work on the part of young persons. In the summer of 1988, for instance, pupils in the metropolis of Hamburg had 45 different competitions to choose from. In this way these initiatives have the tendency to cut the ground away from each other's feet. In practical terms, however, no-one gets to know about all the various offers. In such circumstances, however, it is particularly important to be able to make use of the press, radio, and TV to publicize one's own competition, present motivating examples, and thus canvass for participation. Admittedly, the competitions for the highly

talented are the ones which primarily command supraregional attention.

Thus the cat bites its own tail: the pupils' competition is a member of the distinguished society of top-flight competitions. It has to be to realize its objectives. Competition at the highest level is both a question of philosophy and survival. Even so, the historical competition differs characteristically – and positively – from the other elite contests. In other words, it does not simultaneously neglect to encourage and stimulate all. This is rooted in its objectives of "democratic consciousness" and "political participation". It would be both cynical and contradictory to frustrate younger pupils and disadvantaged school forms. Their personal recognition of the relevance of history and the opportunity to take part in shaping it is just as important as tracking down and promoting a functional elite of the future.

The organization of the competition is designed to harmonize the challenge for the highly gifted with promotion on a broad front. The distribution of the competitors into age-groups and two types of school is reflected – even if there are minor fluctuations – in the distribution of the prizewinners. An ideal project of a Class 8 at a *Hauptschule* (main school), tailored to the possibilities offered by scholastic level and educational course followed, is just as able to win a first prize as a scientific study by two brilliant senior girl pupils. The assessment procedure is carefully geared to a differentiated appraisal of every effort of varying kinds according to its particular circumstances: in other words, the advantages and disadvantages.

The object of promoting the highly gifted is also supported by subsequent activities. Apart from the first prize they were awarded, for instance, the two senior girls mentioned above have a very good chance of being awarded a scholarship by the "Foundation of the German People", enabling them to enlarge their personal library and to study abroad during their university career. Even those winning a second or third prize can look forward to similar prospects of receiving an ad-

Whether in a primeval forest in New Zealand (left), or in the homeless-scene in New York (right), competition prizewinners can, within the framework of the Herbert-Weichmann-Scholarship Scheme, do realistic research for unusual articles and, with a little bit of luck, join the ranks of young journalists.

ditional award. This stems from the fact that the pupils' competition has its own selection commission for this "highly talented foundation" which is obliged to award several scholarships annually, initially for the first two years of study. Moreover, competition prizewinners can take part in a follow-up competition (Herbert Weichmann Scholarship scheme) for an extended trip abroad and win yet a further prize by writing reports about it and test their talents for taking up

journalism as a profession. Since the competition procedures greatly resemble journalistic research work, it is a helpful preparation and a corresponding professional plan fairly likely.

The same applies to the younger age-groups and disadvantaged types of school: the profit gained from the competition does not conclude with the prize-awards. Receptions and honours by Land (constituent state) ministers and local mayors, money prizes, and trips frequently follow on. The importance of local publicity should not be underestimated; reference to a Federal President's prize is very likely to be of use in future applications for a training place or a job. Indeed, there are a number of indications suggesting that even those groups profit who did not complete their project or who did submit non-prizeworthy entries. The pride in having tackled a serious assignment seems to outweigh the disappointment and frustration incurred in most cases.

The permanent contact maintained by the pupils' competition with the "best acrobats" among the former prizewinners also benefits the competition itself. There are, for instance, "recidivists" who have taken part several times already, improved with every participation, or who have won the best prizes right from the start. "Highly gifted" or highly motivated young persons are the competition's figureheads and publicity media. Top prizewinners take part in a public discourse on "democratic consciousness", "political participation", and above all, of course, the respective competition topic (e. g. "Everyday Life under National Socialism", "Environment has a History", "Our Town – a Home for Foreigners?"); they become "public figures" – to a modest degree. As such, incidentally, they do not normally go on to study history and the pupils' competition is in no way interested in them doing so. The promotion of the highly gifted is not intended to groom single-track specialists, i.e. an early recruitment scheme to safeguard an adequate supply of university professors for history. On the contrary, it is designed to promote the appearance of emancipated citizens with special intellectual

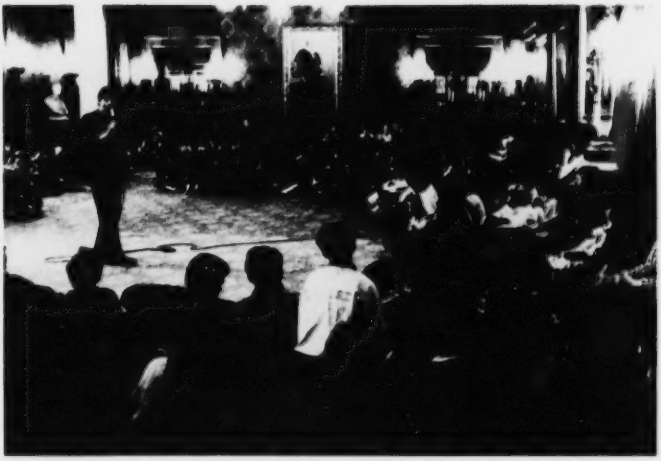
and social skills, such as in the role of future industrial managers and trade union secretaries.

The competition's aim is to intensify, to differentiate, to revise the history culture of the Federal Republic of Germany, to orient it towards democratic traditions, current problems, humane shaping of the future, and outstanding deficits. For this reason, it is important for the pupils' competition to be an omnipresent institution, organizing exhibitions and press conferences, producing books and magazines. It is even more important, though, for these young persons – prizewinners and non-prizewinners alike – to take part themselves in the public and informal debate at all levels (federal, state and local, publicistics, political parties and associations, university, school, and firm). In doing so, the highly gifted top prizewinners can take on symbolic and model functions – but not take the work off other people's shoulders.

3 Developments and results

The origin, development, and significance of the "Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's German History Prize" can only be subjected to well-considered assessment in the light of the conditions and changes in the political climate and historical culture of the last 20 years. It would be presumptious to award it a leading role but also inappropriate to accord it a mere concomitant function in the chorus of voices. Despite its dependence on general political and ideological consciousness, the pupils' competition, within the narrower confines of historical initiatives, is an active partner, cooperatively and competitively, for all others.

The pupils' competition gives and takes in relation to academic historical science, to the obligatory scholastic learning of history, to non-professional regional and local history ("History Workshops", "Barefoot Historians") and museums



The findings of pupils' research do not gather dust on archives shelves; they also provide material for exciting discussions on site. Hamburg's Environmental Senator Jörg Kuhbier debating with prizewinners in the 'Environment has a History' competition

for social and cultural history. This is occasioned by the fact that most persons working on an honorary basis for the pupils' competition can fall back on experience and impulses from their full-time profession. In the case of new developments, the question as to the inaugurator and the successors in such innovative action is often enough the old problem of which came first – the hen or the egg. All those concerned are simultaneously initiators but also beneficaries of the innovations already. Within the trends of a culture of history which is determined by problem consciousness and social and public awareness, one can ask at most whether the pupils' competition itself has set railway trains in motion which travel-hungry and mainly younger members of the history guild have boarded, or whether the competition has jumped on the historian guild's moving trains – and in good time thanks to close acquaintance with several active engine drivers and timetable planners.

3.1 Series: "Promoting better Understanding of German Freedom Movements" (1974, 1975, 1976)

The late 1960s represent a critical period in the cultural development of the Federal Republic. At that time, during the "Students' Revolt of 1968", a large number of young intellectuals felt they could no longer bear the "encrusted, ossified structures". With demonstrations and blockades, an "extra-parliamentary opposition" stirred up public opinion. What took place at higher education institutions and schools at the time is now regarded by many – approvingly or regretfully – as a "cultural revolution". 20 years after the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany, the reins of government for the first time passed into the hands of the Social Democrats, the major former opposition party. Although this seems a perfectly normal procedure in a parliamentary democracy, it was by no means so since, among other things, it initiated changes in foreign policy ("Ostpolitik", "Reconciliation with East European Neighbours") which at first deeply divided the nation.

At the same time, the functions of history among the general public as well as the science of history and history lessons in schools, were experiencing a severe crisis. In the minds of both the technocrats and the revolutionaries, traditions were largely regarded as dispensable in favour of inherent necessities or Utopias. As rapid and far-reaching a change as possible tended to be glorified rather than feared. The student movement had coined the slogan "Don't trust anyone over 30". Many of the education ministries worked on directives and curricula in which "history" was to lose its independent status as a subject in school and become part of the more general teaching of "social science". Academic history adopted an unusually stubborn attitude, continued to adhere to conventional state history and national-conservative points of view, even regarding social and economic history as irrelevant or socialist on occasions. In this way, it relegated

itself into a backwater. The majority of pupils and citizens yawned at the mere thought of history.

Since its exodus between 1933–1945, systematic sociology had not really re-established itself; Marxism was categorically rejected by the majority of people during the 1949–1969 Cold War era. Now, quite suddenly, both proved fascinating as "new phenomena", briefly dominated the scene and hoodwinked everybody into believing in its competence in respect of all problems. Little room seemed to remain for history, particularly since the guilt and defeat of National Socialism, loss of national territory and the division of the nation had left too many scars and uncertainties to make an intensive and passionate – but nevertheless tolerable and fruitful – processing possible for all citizens.

Ever since 1970, Federal President Gustav Heinemann (1969–1974) had repeatedly urged those responsible to reprocess history rather than drop it entirely. His demand for a better understanding and more intensive adoption of "German freedom movements" and "democratic traditions" was no more an acceptance of the "Cultural Revolution" than it was its rejection. Instead, it was a productive answer which took up justified elements in the desire for democracy and participation and corrected exaggerated demands; in other words, offering alternative tradition instead of a complete lack of history. Willy Brandt, the Social Democratic Federal Chancellor, reduced his whole policy to a similar formula in his first government statement in 1969: "Mehr Demokratie wagen" (Risking greater democracy). This in no way implied the surrender of parliamentary procedures – but the absorption of the substance contained in the questions raised by demonstrators and protesters. As far as history is concerned, the pupils' competition – albeit somewhat belatedly – fulfilled this demand in 1973–1974.

It goes without saying that this new departure did not happen in a vacuum or without precedents in the science of history. There, a small group of young historians had long protested the solidified majority opinion. They called for a

Promoting Understanding of German Freedom Movements

1974 *'The 1848/49 German Revolution'*
4,525 competitors
760 entries

1975 *'From Empire to Republic 1918/19'*
2,721 competitors
464 entries

1976 *'Democratic New Beginning 1945-46'*
3,226 competitors
505 entries

change of paradigm, a new approach to the task and achievement of history: national political history of a conservative stamp should be replaced by history in the form of social science with emancipatory intention. This group viewed social history as structural history. In this way, social processes and social movements enjoyed the limelight. General structures and modernization processes had to be illustrated by local examples. A wealth of studies, mostly examination projects or theses emerged on such topics as regional industrialization, workers' movements in the respective cities and industrial areas, the local character of the "Council Movement" in the 1918/19 revolution.

The three pupils' competitions on "promoting better understanding of German freedom movements", namely, "The German Revolution 1848/49" (1974), "The Transition from Empire to Republic 1918/19" (1975), and "A New Democratic Beginning 1945–46" (1976) reflected this trend of a more oppositional current in historical science very accurately and reinforced it. Only optimists had thought that already the first competition would prompt the submission of more than 750 group projects on an event which had taken place 125 years ago and thereby rescue revolutionary trends from all parts of

New Democratic Beginning on the Saar?

Extract from an entry submitted in the early years of the competition (1976). For their entry regarding the 'Democratic new Beginning 1945/46' the four female pupils of a Class 8 from Heidelberg received a third prize.

Summary

We have based this paper on 'New Democratic Beginning 1945/46', the topic of the Gustav-Heinemann-Competition. In the course of working on this project, we noted that one cannot speak at all of a new beginning in the actual sense in the case of the 'Middle Rhine-Saar Government'. After the long and ardous war, democracy was non-existent in Germany. But also directly after the war and the National Socialist regime, in other words during the time the 'Middle Rhine-Saar Government' was in office, democratic politics could not develop as West Germany was occupied by allied forces. The cities had been badly destroyed. Hunger prevailed and there was a lack of the bare necessities. The population was happy that the war was over. Herr Mitscherlich said in his interview (p. 1), for example, that many were glad that the Nazis were no longer in power. But the greater part of the population was utterly incapable of showing interest in political matters in the immediate postwar months since most of them were still POWs, or expelled, or were no longer used to any politics other than those under the Nazis. Many did not even want to try because they were disappointed or doubted that there was any point at all in engaging oneself in politics in Germany.

The 'Middle Rhine-Saar Government' was not a democratically elected government. It had been set up by the Military Government. In fact, it was not a government at all – even though it is called so by many – but tried, for a few weeks only, to reestablish administration in one part of Germany. The population had more or less no influence on this government and no rights of co-determination. Even the government itself had only the rights it had been accorded by the US-Military Government. From the records and reports we read and heard, we gathered that the persons who collaborated in the government were mainly occupied with reorganizing the bare necessities as best they could. They checked to see if the villages and towns still had burgomasters (who were not Nazis), if there were food offices to distribute the food, whether factories could be started up again and shelter could be found for the homeless. Moreover, only some of the members of the government were in any way professionals who had worked previously as civil servants or in the administration (only Dr. Heimerich had been chief burgomaster before the Nazi era). They had no ambitious plans as to how things were to go on in the 'Middle Rhine-Saar' area. It was still too soon for this and the government's time in office was too brief. There were still no political parties: they were refounded at a later stage. In other words, it must be said that in these months there was nothing resembling democracy yet as we regard it today.

Nonetheless, we believe the 'Middle Rhine-Saar Government' is part of the new democratic beginning in Germany. In this connection Herr Mitscherlich said (p. 6):

> *'It was a new democratic beginning because the people who formed this government were democrats and did nothing undemocratic.'*

In our opinion, the most important aspects in this regard were:
There was a sort of government consisting of Germans. Even at that time, the Occupying Powers were of the opinion that if a government was to be democratic, the people should not be governed by foreigners but by persons who had the same native land and the same language.

The members of this government expressed their willingness to participate because they thought it right and because they realized that, now that the Nazis had gone, something new could only develop, if the people saw that a few men, who were Germans but nevertheless not Nazis, were setting about the task of doing away with disorder, helping the population – and that these men harboured hopes for the future.

Perhaps it was not a bad thing that most of the members of the government were not professionals but 'amateurs', to quote Herr Sternberger. For this showed the people that one can participate in politics even without great previous experience of government and that not everything has to be done by civil servants.

Furthermore, the persons who collaborated in the government saw how one had to work with others who had quite different opinions (e. g. Americans). There were persons with differing views even within the government itself, Herr Sternberger told us.

In other words, even if this government was not yet a democratic government, it undoubtedly helped the Germans to get used to thinking in democratic terms once more.

Susanne Fuschlitz

Christiane Tenge

Friederike Nüssel

Catharina Zeit

the Federal Republic from obscurity. The basic idea of the competition was thus justified and confirmed in an outstanding manner.

In view of the astonishing success and the pleasing discovery that explorative learning of history on a local level was really possible, that politics had not been restricted to tiny decision-making groups in capitals etc. , the deficits of this point of departure were overlooked; in fact, the approach continued to be biased by political history of a conventional nature and, basically, took constitutional questions as a subject, at best "social history from above". Wherever the economy and society made an appearance, this resulted from the dramatic state of emergency and distress in the selected years 1848/49, 1918/19, and 1945/46; in other words, the irrepressible everyday experiences of contemporaries themselves.

Furthermore, the number of competitors in 1975 shrank quite considerably compared with the first competition. The continuation of the competition following the completion of office by its founder, Gustav Heinemann, was not without problems – as the changed name reveals. The "Gustav Heinemann Prize for German School Youth" was replaced by the "Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's German History Prize". At the same time, a new series was launched: "Everyday Social History". Many an observer at the time felt that the competiton had been "falsified", "depoliticized", and "tamed". However, anticipations or fears to this effect soon turned out to be without foundation.

3.2 Series: "Everyday Social History" (1977, 1978, 1979)

By the mid-1970s, the crisis surrounding political consciousness and historical orientation in the Federal Republic of Germany had been largely overcome. The new "Ostpolitik" had led to fundamental results, but the "détente" process could not be continued. The Christian Democrats (CDU and CSU) reconciled themselves increasingly with this policy. The

main points on the agenda now were the consequences of the oil-price shock (e. g. the high level of unemployment) and national and international terrorism. In particular, the discussion of the "intellectual roots" and "sympathizers" of terrorism in the Federal Republic (frequent reference was made to the "Students' Revolt of 1968") and the necessary or superfluous restrictions of individual and collective rights of freedom determined and, to some extent, poisoned political and cultural debate among the general public.

These pressing current problems in the social field were not taken up by the pupils' competition – possibly because it wasn't able to. Its development tended more to reflect and accelerate the change in historical awareness and historical science. Dehistoricization, the flight from history, was clearly banished. Sociology and Marxism had passed their peak as fashions and were now confined to their own spheres of competence. Instead, historical questions conquered new fields. "Social history from above", also known as structural and social history, was accepted now. Names, dates, facts, terms – great rulers and unique events no longer constituted the centre of interest. But social history gave rise to new uneasiness as well.

New local and regional studies frequently failed to bring about the expected confirmation of the main outlines. On the contrary, they displayed tenaciously crocheted reality en miniature, often highly contradictory, very persistent and usually very late regarding what was expected. Industrialization, as was now proved, frequently did not take place in detail until after the First or even Second World War. The workers' movement's awareness had, for a very long time, been much more stamped by "handicraft" and much less by "socialism" than had previously been assumed by historians. States of consciousness, ways of communication, and survival techniques now strongly replaced power structures as well as stratified and economic structures. Thus the history of the workers' movement became the history of the workers, the history of the women's movement the history of women . . .

New questions about the past living world were soon described as "The History of Everyday Life and Mentality". It now proved possible to investigate them, mainly on the basis of new groups of sources which academic history had tended to pass over (if not spurn). Family estates were the most important source: personal letters and diaries, poetry albums, collections of photos, newspapers, advertisements, posters, household articles, housing plans, etc. The few autobiographies from the lower classes that had been published were reprinted; further examples were feverishly sought – and occasionally found. This revealed very clearly that "social history from above" was considered as "devoid of human life" with the result that an interest was developed now in real, living persons: "small is beautiful". Minimization of the pre-industrial world and depoliticization of interpretative patterns occurred now and then. In most cases, however, the clear brutality of source material on the hardship endured in pre-industrial and early industrial everyday life prevented this.

Since it soon emerged how young the fully-industrialized, fully-motorized, fully-modernized, fully-secularized world still was (a reality in the lower classes and agricultural areas only since the late 1950s), the intensive, patient inquiry of the older generation established itself as a research method: folklore and ethnology had already adopted this procedure from the beginning. Historians used it as "interview method" or "oral history" for their purposes. Naturally some part of the information included nostalgically romantic transfigurations of personal youth, often standing out in a disconnected and contradictory manner against memories of drastically emphasized gloom which tended to exaggerate the poverty and burdens. In other words, careful attention had to be paid to the way memory works and to the mental function of reminiscent accounts: "oral history" revealed its difficulties and limits.

In this field, the pupils' competition has not only become a successor; it has also become a trailblazer. Put another way, a

Everyday Social History

1977 *'The Working World and Technology in the Process of Change'*
5,203 competitors
1,271 entries

1978 *'Living Accommodation in the Process of Change'*
4,112 competitors
991 entries

1979 *'After-work Hours and Leisure Time in the Process of Change'*
3,995 competitors
756 entries

small number of historians who, as a minority group, attempted to establish this approach in the academic field too, helped foster the pupils' competition. At no other time has the relationship between historical science and the pupils' competition possibly been so close. "The Working World and Technology in the Process of Change" (1977), "Living Accomodation in the Process of Change" (1978), and "After-work Hours and Leisure Time in the Process of Change" (1979) tackled the three central areas of life and successfully historicized the seemingly taken-for-granted "ever-unchanging" and rarely historically-researched daily round. The significance of this activity is difficult to illustrate in retrospect. What has meantime become common property, in other words, a "cultural matter of course", can hardly be regarded as a breakthrough. Nowadays, what tends to be more conspicuous are the somewhat homespun formulations and the emphasis on purely technical changes (instead of their mental assimilation).

Such retrospective judgements are unfair, however. By largely excluding the living world and everyday mentality previously, on the grounds of not being worthy of academic attention, or leaving them to neighbouring fields, such as

'Living Accommodation in the Process of Change' (1978) Finds by pupils

A Hamburg street – today (photo)

... and formerly (collage)

folklore, historiography had more or less fostered an unhistorical, virtually natural, static interpretation of this sector. In the final analysis, its own interpretative patterns had been reduced since the changing structure of human character, social characters and motivations and behaviour patterns which were determined and firmly moulded by views of the world, had been excluded from the historical process. As it was not explained itself and not used for the explanation of social changes, the history of ideas floated remotely, as ist were, high above the "static" and day-to-day thought and behaviour patterns of human beings. It is significant that a fundamental theory, such as Norbert Elias's "Process of Civilization" (1938), is not from the pen of a historian and was broadly – but explosively – adopted only from 1975 onwards; the French historiographic school of the "Annales" fared a similar fate.

The "Everyday Social History" series saw the introduction of several procedural innovations which have proved their worth and been retained. They include, for instance, the admission of individual competitors instead of being restricted to group projects. Despite the methodical difficulties experienced by young persons in using interview material in a scientifically critical manner, this group of source material has been increasingly – in other words systematically and resolutely – suggested to competitors. In spite of getting bogged down in the oftentimes-related, stereotyped stories and failing to achieve an objective interpretation uncovering contradictions, the gain from an intensive "dialogue between the generations" is still great enough to warrant this procedure. Time and again, individual pupils have submitted excellent entries of professional standard in regard to the conduct, documentation, and interpretation of an interview.

The higher assessment and greater prominence of the pupils' projects themselves were likewise significant. Hitherto, on conclusion of a competition, relevant anthologies of scientific essays were distributed among participants. For many pupils with poorer achievement levels and a lesser amount of reading

this must have appeared off-putting or even scornful in view of the disparity with their own language and simpler interpretation models. Ever since the "Living Accommodation in the Process of Change" competition, their own year books have been brought out containing excerpts from particularly successful, original, typical, ingenuous, or interesting pupils' entries. These always very concrete and ofttimes witty – even if occasionally naive – utterances by youngsters of the same age proved to be much more suitable to send to all competitors. By means of original pupils' entries – outstanding as well as average ones – it proved possible to conduct youth-tailored dialogue on the topics in question.

The combination of non-professional "explorative learning", "everyday life", and "local history" obviously met a deep demand. Around 1980, a few years after the "Everyday Social History" series, a federal-wide, out-of-school movement devoted to cultural activity and known as "Historical Workshops" came into being along the same lines. It consists of a number of historiographical citizen's action groups of "Barefoot Historians" who, taking "Dig where you are standing" as their motto, want to explore the roots of the world they live

in, thus clarifying and extending their own identity. The extent to which the pupils' competition provided this movement with direct impulses and models, or how far it is a case of a younger, independent, parallel movement, is relatively unimportant in this context. What does seem important, however, is the fact that the activity in city districts and the securing of evidence by the "Historical Workshops" represents a continuous enrichment of West German historical culture.

3.3 Series: "Uncompleted Study of Contemporary History" (1980/81, 1982/83, 1984/85)

It is often claimed that an analysis of the National Socialist (Nazi) past was not seriously undertaken until the late 1960s. This criticism is incorrect. The truth is that the study of contemporary history is as old as the Federal Republic of Germany itself. The impact of this activity, however, was limited for numerous reasons: many contemporaries had been intensely involved in the violent and inhuman policy practised by the Nazi regime or had actively supported it. If they had not undergone a genuine change, a conversion, as it were, after 1945, they were incapable of reflecting on or talking about fascism without resorting to minimization and justification, suppression and aggressiveness.

Consciously or unconsciously, the blame was frequently transferred abroad (War Guilt Paragraph 1919, reparations, world economic crisis, appeasement policy, etc.). Above all, everything was personalized without any inhibitions: Hitler and the people around him were built up into omnipotent geniuses and evil demons – against whom – it was stated – all resistance or self-assertion had been impossible. By means of this interpretation, the responsibility was placed firmly at the door of those who were dead anyway. The processing of the past eventually got caught up in the maelstrom of the "Cold

War". National Socialism was declared to be a sort of hostile twin-brother of Bolshevism; both being "totalitarian systems", they had been closely related to one another, it was said. So the condemnation or even investigation of "finished-and-done-with" National Socialism appeared less important than the struggle against "surviving" Communism.

What is contained in school textbooks, films, or scientific publications up to the year 1968 in the way of excusing, playing down, or denying National Socialism must have influenced informal communication in families to a much greater extent; after all, the older persons had been contemporaries and accomplices. For alert, morally sensitive young persons, the way school and the media in the 1950s and 1960s dealt with the crimes and everyday life under National Socialism was extremely unsatisfactory. The violent nature of the "Students' Revolt of 1968" is, in the final analysis, attributable to the overlapping of the general generation gap by specifically accusing the parents of having failed during the fascist era. As a result, many individual detachment and maturing processes were for years imbued with personal severity and political intensification. There arose a personal autobiographically moulded species of literature settling the score with alleged or actual fascist fathers.

A media event in January 1979 shattered the Federal Republic. A good 40 % of the young people and adults saw the eight-hour US TV-series "Holocaust" which was shown on four nights. Taking one family as an example, the series describes the persecution and slaughter of five to six million European Jews by the Nazis. The impact on families and schools, firms and the general public was greater than anything else since 1945. This was undoubtedly the result of the trivial but striking style, the compulsion to identify oneself with a small number of concrete persons and their individual fates. But it also revealed increased sensitivity in the general public, a new readiness to grapple with the horrors of the 1933–1945 era.

The conflicts between parents and children had meanwhile died out. The fathers and mothers of adolescents in 1979 had, at best, experienced National Socialism only as children and were definitely neither personally responsible for the Nazi crimes nor had they committed them. Now the – less tense – relationship between grandparents and grandchildren was of a greater concern. What had it really been like? How could it happen at all? How did you actually live at the time? Was it even bearable? The questions put by the young people had become more relaxed: the behaviour of the older people had changed even more. After 35 years of trauma and closing their eyes, many of them seemed to discover a need to communicate, often shortly before death. At that time, the opportunity was offered for a clarifying dialogue between the generations – maybe simultaneously for the first and last time.

New problems on the subject of National Socialism had also surfaced for some time now in the field of academic history. The personalization and demonization of one solitary figure – Adolf Hitler – drew to a close. Now the structure and function of the regime, its inconsistency and temporary character were discovered. This led to the question about thought forms and interests by its beneficaries and admirers, its promoters and followers. In this connection, eyes turned automatically to individual localities and regions, to everyday life between state control and private nooks. Individual groups who lived under and were controlled by the regime, their contribution to the system, and the manner in which they were influenced and manipulated, were now an object of interest: women, young people, workers, farmers, self-supporting persons . . .

When "Everyday Life under National Socialism. From the End of the Weimar Republic to World War II" was announced as the topic for the 1980 pupils' competition, it was therefore fully in line with the trend evident in historical science and the general public. Naturally, the everyday aspect was retained: the main point was not supposed to be the retracing of the actions and motives of a handful of criminal

Unfinished Contemporary History

1980–81 *'Everyday Life under National Socialism. From the End of the Weimar Republic to the Second World War'*
12,843 competitors
2,172 entries

1982–83 *'Everyday Life under National Socialism. The War Years in Germany'*
5,894 competitors
1,168 entries

1984–85 *'From the Collapse to Reconstruction. Everday Life in Postwar Germany'*
3,994 competitors
708 entries

political leaders. The setting of this topic was accompanied by great expectations – but not without a certain amount of concern regarding its acceptance by and among the pupils to whom it was addressed. There was, as a matter of fact, also criticism among the general public who feared "a fouling of the German nation's nest by some immature adolescents".

When the entries were submitted, the quantity (at 2,200, almost triple the number submitted for the preceding topic) and the quality exceeded all expectations: it was a singular breakthrough which stretched the organization to its utmost limits. In order to cope with the quantity and quality, the following competition had to be postponed; since that time it has been organized on a bi-annual basis. Neofascist entries were missing almost entirely. Admittedly, the depth of the interpretations and political conclusions was diverse and

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An unearthed document
A denunciation letter from a member of the parish church council. (From: Archives of the Protestant-Lutheranian State Church, Braunschweig. The name of the undersigned had to be disguised by the pupils.

Dörnbergerstraße 2 *Braunschweig, 17 April 1937*

Councillor of State
Mr. Kurt Bertram
Braunschweig
Braunschweigische Staatsbank

Dear Mr. Councillor of State, Dear Comrade Bertram,

As I have already informed you, Pastor Goetze has been the resident priest in the Paulus Parish for many years. Goetze, who is well known as an outsider and whose political attitude is more than unreliable, and whose utterances from the pulpit against the Third Reich brought him to public notice in a disagreeable manner already some time ago, has now incurred displeasure within the parish once more. It has turned out that this priest is a Half-Jew. Now that this has become known, his attitude towards the Third Reich can be explained, of course.

Currently, I am a delegated party member of the parish council of the Paulus Church Parish. I ask you to relieve this priest of his office with all the means at your disposal.

Or are such matters, such as the filling of ecclesiastical posts with Jews or Half-Jews, supposed to let the German Protestant Church decay of its own accord? The embitterment of the National Socialist parishioners in respect of Goetze is, of course, great.

I likewise regret to have to inform you that I can no longer take any form of orders from Pastor Goetze, the chairman of the parish council. As a National Socialist and political leader, it is out of the question for me to be commanded in any way by a Half-Jew or to acknowledge this 'gentleman' as the head of our council.

In the interest of the National Socialist parishioners, I ask you once more to kindly take steps to see that Pastor Goetze disappears from his post in a German Protestant parish.

Heil Hitler
signed . . .

varied. In many cases, however, the earnestness and the ability to express differentiated empathy with both the victims and the conflict situations of the followers was astonishing.

Up to that time, the Nazis had always been "the others" in history lessons and the general public. Now, following local research work, it was discovered that it had not happened "somewhere else" but "amongst us", that the same persons had been "Nazis and neighbours". Never before had National Socialist penetration of schools been investigated so closely, so diversely, and from such a subjective, internal angle. Now pupils were able to imagine what "Educated to die" meant. Before, the role of women and the National Socialist "Frauenschaft" (women's organization) had only rarely been examined from several aspects and in different places. Now the contrast between theory and practice, between contempt and glorification was brought to light – in a more or less differentiated manner.

True, this positive assessment refers mainly to the very best projects and the powerful follow-up group. Although the bulk of the average entries was in no way neofascist, the helplessness of society in dealing with fascism was reflected. Although naive, superficial descriptions, such as everyday life in the Hitler Youth, were realistic, it became apparent – as was only to be expected – that young persons experienced great difficulty in penetrating National Socialism more profoundly and in drawing concrete and appropriate conclusions for the present.

Even so, it would be rash to blame the competitors for this partial failure. Since they had to create something themselves, the degree of processing and the magnitude of the helplessness became obvious. With the normal procedure of simply adopting the generalizing and smooth content of school textbooks, the extent of misunderstanding and indifference could well remain concealed. The lessons often went above the pupils' heads or went in one ear and out the other. As a result, the authentic expression of a personal, preliminary, and incomplete attempt to gain insight must in itself be regarded as a

Two ways of going about history

Thoughtless cynicism discovered by competitors ...

Looking for traces: former Jewish morgue used as a garage (Duisburg)

and dignified commemoration initiated by competitors

Pupils of Hamburg remind the public of an almost forgotten concentration camp in Sasel

gain – despite all clumsiness. At any rate, as far as the pupils are concerned, the inconsistency between the relatively irrelevant "official" history and the practical effect of pseudo-history is reduced from their everyday lives. Apart from a stock-check of the difficulties and the deficits, hope also remains for a progressive, long-term after-effect in the case of the average entries.

More than ever, the problem of further use of the material brought to light by the competitors – material which had been unknown to research in some cases – presented itself now. Apart from the Year Book, a series of monographs and anthologies appeared. In addition, regional exhibitions were assembled and shown.

The chronological continuation of the topics set was inevitable: the next competition was entitled "Everyday Life under National Socialism. The War Years in Germany" (1982/83). In regard to quantity the previous unique record was not repeated. Even so, the almost 1,200 entries and the well-nigh 6,000 competitors was the third or the second-best result respectively in the entire history of the competition. What was more important was the fact that entries of an outstanding level were just as frequent and diverse as before. The innovative effect was to be rated even higher. Only in the case of average and poor entries was the number lower.

Naturally, the projects dealt with all conceivable sectors of everyday life. Nevertheless, a point of main emphasis emerged which had also been overlooked by research for the most part – with the exception of two young historians who, as members of the central jury, had been associated with the competition for years. The fate of some 10 million POWs and

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The fate of the persons obliged to do forced labour in National Socialist Germany moved many of the competitors in 1982/83. As a result of their findings an impressive touring exhibition was organized which experienced shattering reality in Poland: father (with flowers in his hand) and sister (next to him on left) discovered on one of the exhibition panels the grave of their little Welislawa who was murdered at the age of two months by the Nazis.

Geheim
Betreff:
Versorgung der Kinder

persons obliged to do forced labour during the war – together with concentration-camp inmates who were likewise often drafted in from outside camps – who worked, lived, and suffered alongside the civilian population and died in their hundreds of thousands, was a subject intensively investigated by the young competitors.

To their disbelieving astonishment, the pupils discovered that there had been camps of this type – great and small – literally everywhere, next door or round the corner, and that countless firms had manufactured their goods with the help of forced labour. In many cases, the partly levelled-off or forgotten graveyards were found once more, neglected memorials were uncovered, or new plaques vigorously called for. The discovery of this group of victims by the grandchildren of the perpetrators triggered a powerful wave abroad as well. A deeply moving exhibition was shown in several cities in Poland and the Soviet Union. Anyone well-familiar with literature must acquire a different picture of World War II after this competition.

This does not mean the other horrors were forgotten: a documentation on the great fire-storm in Hamburg following extensive air raids in July/August 1943 won a first prize. On the other hand, however, it is now no longer possible to erase from our memories the emaciated columns of women and men in striped prison clothing being herded along by armed, well-fed men and women from the SS, to perform life-destroying heavy labour. Concrete research into this particular field has been continued since the competition. Even firms' archives are becoming accessible. The question of financial compensation is being rediscussed.

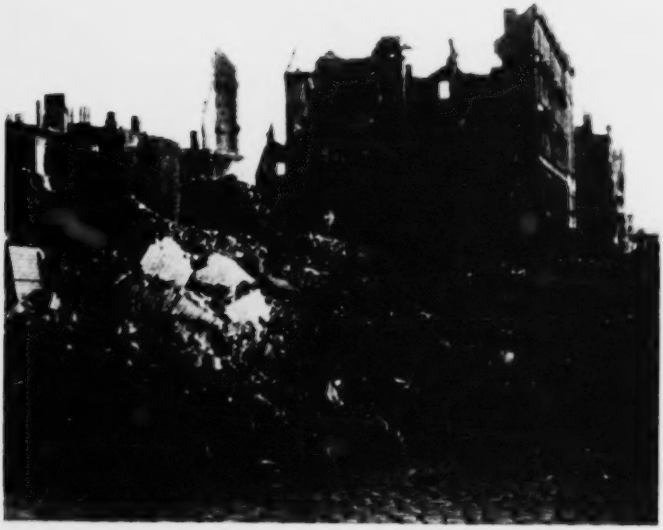
A further chronological continuation offered itself once more for the next competition: "From the Collapse to Reconstruction. Everyday Life in Postwar Germany" (1984/85). The competition on the period 1945–1955 was not intended to deal with the Economic Miracle and the successful history of re-emergence. The topic set was more about "Everyday Life under National Socialism III: the subsequent Problems and

Consequences of the air raids in 1943

... before

Hamburg: Danielstraße

and after



Years". This subject was only partially taken up by the competitors. It comes as no surprise that the more than 10 million refugees and expellees constituted by far the most popular subject. After all, in practically every family there were eyewitnesses and directly affected persons.

Strangely enough, this topic also seemed to have remained buried formerly. Now young persons displayed sensitive understanding for people having to abandon their former homes, for the horrors of the long wintry treks and transports, the not always friendly reception in mass quarters or cramped accommodation, the struggle to find work and food, the arguments about "equalization of burdens", and the arduous beginnings of integration in a new homeland which could not be foreseen as either lasting or successful at the time.

The bitter facts of flight and expulsion were viewed without hate – but not without sorrow. They were perceived as the terrors and consequences of war – but too little understood as the reaction to the National Socialist policy of destruction and too scantily seen in connection with the question of guilt. Impressive entries – albeit few in number – were also submitted on denazification, i.e. the administrative and judicial treatment of former Nazi functionaries, and the fate of "displaced persons", i.e. former forced labour victims and POWs. Even projects on the incipient reconstruction were clearly related to the after-effects of National Socialism, such as the development of a community from the barrack huts of a vacated POW camp. Whatever the case may be, the pupils did not make the mistake of adopting the attitude "We're somebody once more". . .

3.4 Series: "Today's Problems on the Test Bed of Historical Experiences" (1986/87, 1988/89, 1990/91)

Despite the achievements of the three competitions "Everyday Life under National Socialism", the declining trend in parti-

cipation could not be denied; the postwar competition did not even come to one-third of the 1980/81 record level. A further instalment entitled "Everyday Life in Economic Wonderland. 1956–66" was ruled out for reasons of content and organization. Furthermore, the situation in society and historical culture had changed yet again in the meantime. A deep pessimism, a worldwide awareness of a crisis had emerged. Ecological overexploitation, ecological catastrophes, the accelerating arms race, and growing impoverishment in the Third World had a determinative influence on reports in the mass media and the thoughts of many sensitive persons.

During these years, millions of women and men, and young persons, in particular, organized themselves into loosely-knit citizens' initiatives and movements. The most important were the women's movement, the peace movement, the environment movement. They created a new culture of peaceful protest, determined the subjects of discussion at Church congresses, prevented the construction of nuclear power stations, etc. It was the successful founding of a new party – the "Greens" – which then also influenced the political system of the Federal Republic. The forms of action employed by the social movements were not entirely uncontroversial. After all, they occasionally broke what they regarded to be minor rules of law to draw attention to glaring shortcomings and misguided developments, in favour of the supreme object of legal protection – the survival of man. Even conservative circles did not dispute the fact that the women's, peace, and environment movements were asking legitimate questions.

When the 1985 pupils' competition reacted to this social situation, the peak of the widespread impact of the social movements (1983) had been passed. Its effect in depth persisted, however, and its end was – and fortunately still is – nowhere in sight. It was in this context that a new series was conceived with the title "Today's Problems on the Test Bed of Historical Experiences". In other words, it was now deliberately a matter of taking up and taking seriously the fundamental fears and hopes of society at the present time – which are

nowhere more clearly expressed than in the social movements. Like their observers and critics, these movements need – both in the positive and negative sense – historical foundation and reflection. Historical analogies and experiences are important although former experiences must not be regarded directly and without further ado as instructions for the future – either for environmental protection, the maintenance of peace, equal rights for women, or policy in regard to foreigners.

Even so, in regard to every pressing problem of our time, history furnishes us with four fundamental ways of looking at things and with fruitful argumentation correlations. It can bring about experience of genesis and change, i.e. it can expound the gradual rising and long-term development of a currently pressing problem, such as the dying forests as the result of acid rain.

It helps the understanding of "otherness" and "foreignness", in other words, is able, in quite an astonishing manner, to show other problem situations and describe the different solutions and settlements reached in analogous conflicts, e.g. production limits, process modifications, and the redressing of damage in the case of environmental pollution, as well as carefully balanced and ecologically beneficial industrial practices.

History is able to provide experiences of non-requital and of exemplariness by once more bringing up for discussion more humane but hitherto non-implemented or seemingly abortive recommendations and endeavours. Here, mention must be made of the Indian subordination and adaption of human beings to nature in contrast to the European urge to dominate nature – as well as the resistance of alleged "enemies of progress" to uncontrolled and unlimited economic growth.

By means of examples it can, in the final analysis, verify that conditions can be changed or shaped, i.e. indicating in an exemplary manner, the scope and limits of actions in the past in regard to forest policy and forest economy since the 18th century, thus encouraging responsible and realistic politics. The more apocalyptic the future prospects and scenarios, the

Today's Problems on the Test Bed of Historical Experiences

1986–87	*'The Environment has a History'*	
	5,004 competitors	
	1,016 entries	
1988–89	*'Our Town – a Home for Foreigners?'**	
	6,299 competitors	
	1,111 entries	
1990–91	*'Youth and Old Age'*	
	'Women and Men'	
	'Health and Sickness'	
	'War and Peace'	
		381 entries
		654 competitors
		40 nations

* *Also competition abroad 'Being a Foreigner in Germany'*

more important a present-day and problem-conscious historical analysis becomes – not in order to obstruct the view of the new types of problems and qualitative leaps and to stick one's head in the sand, but to remain rational, even in great danger.

In other words, the "Today's Problems on the Test Bed of Historical Experiences" series adopted the same structural attitude to social movements as the "Promotion of Understanding of the German Freedom Movements" series had to the pupils' and students' protest 12 years before. It took up legitimate questions but urged reflection and substantiation. In a way, the "Everyday Social History" series was resumed – but with examples of a more explosive-like nature. This time the reaction was faster, with less safeguards in academic

history. Research methods deriving from topical questions are highly suspicious: the problems of environment history, the history of women, immigration, peace movements have, as a consequence, scarcely been researched. At most, a handful of progressive and innovative historians had begun to investigate the history of women around 1975 and the history of the environment around 1980.

In view of the world-wide threat to the natural resources of human life, the first topic to come to the fore was "Environment has a History" (1986/87). The general public followed the competition with eager expectation. Since scientific bases were lacking to a large extent, the projects had to be given more assistance than usual. History teachers often felt overtaxed by the completely new type of questions. Only occasionally did teachers of politics and biology step into the breach. As a result, the great successes experienced in 1980/81 and 1982/83 were not repeated – despite intensive efforts – merely in regard to quantity; qualitatively, though, the breakthrough was only comparable to "Everyday Life under National Socialism I". Initially, the effect in depth outweighed the broad impact.

Pupils discovered the tremendous pace at which their environment has changed – and frequently deteriorated – at man's hand in the last 100 years, especially in the last 30. As a result of the source material situation and the motivation, the main part of the competitors' entries dealt with the manifold problems of water, correction of the course of rivers, canal construction, the supply of drinking-water, sewage disposal, pollution of rivers by industry and faeces, the draining of marshland, etc. The range covered by other projects was likewise copious: by-pass roads, pollution of long-standing by

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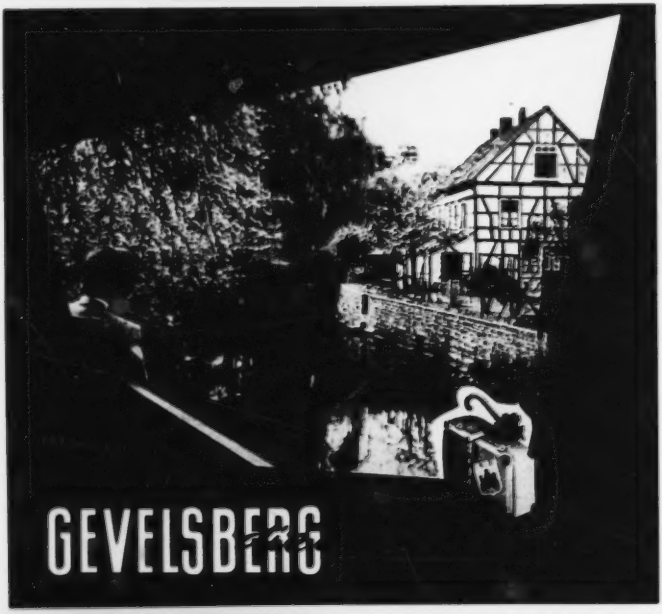
Yesterday and Today

'The Environment has a History'
This is not only proved by front page environment catastrophes of yesteryear but also by a wealth of creeping changes which have been documented by competitors.



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industry, biotope changes, nature reserves, parks, dying forests, mining and mining damage, etc. Overall, the pupils' research findings (in addition to their impact on the general public and their influence on historical consciousness) undoubtedly equate to the fruits of several years of work in the still young field of historical environmental research in the Federal Republic. This time the amateurs have beaten the pros.

Whereas the environmental problem changed the German political party landscape from the left-wing through the "Greens", the success of the Republicans in 1989 has conjured up the danger of a fifth party on the right-wing. The rise of this party is probably attributable mainly to people's irrational worries about foreign workers, asylum-seekers, and ethnic German repatriates who only now are beginning to arrive in great number – in short, the hostility on the part of many Germans towards foreigners. The longing for the comforting security of one's own home country and the fear of foreign infiltration had long been recognized as pressing current problems and were thus chosen as the topic for the 1988/89 competition "Our Town – a Home for Foreigners?". It called for pondering over immigration and integration, as well as isolation and catastrophes of earlier epochs, and for "digesting" these aspects as historical experiences in order to make them fruitful for the current efforts to reduce anxiety.

The competition publication "Spuren suchen 2" (Seeking Traces 2) clearly illustrates the extent to which Germany has been enriched through contacts with foreigners. There is hardly a family which cannot claim immigrants among its own ancestors. The German language is full of loan-words, family and street names everywhere remind us of immigrants and their great achievements. Literature boasts of a number of famous authors who are unmistakably the descendants of foreigners who became German nationals: Sophie von La Roche, Adalbert v. Chamisso, Friedrich de la Motte-Fouqué, Clemens Brentano, Bettina Brentano, Theodor Fontane, Egon Erwin Kisch . . . Hostility towards foreigners – a closer study

makes this readily apparent – is a form of inferiority complex and narrow-mindedness. Learning from foreigners, understanding them, letting them live in their own way, or – if they so desire – integrating them with their particular features – this is both humane and beneficial.

The quantity and quality of the entries were in no way inferior to those of former years. On the contrary, for the very first time, the second topic in a series succeeded in surpassing the first. Admittedly, to achieve this the 8 to 10-year-olds had to be additionally addressed and a considerable amount of public relations work and publicity undertaken – which will hardly permit any further increase. Obviously the problem of "Homeland and Foreigners" met a demand among young persons. The most popular example – as in 1984/85 – were the refugees and expellees following World War II. It is still close enough to provide a productive historical comparison and, at the same time, remote and isolated enough to trigger no further anxieties – unlike "The Problem of Foreign Workers".

Many of the competitors did not use the chance to criticize hostility towards foreigners, isolation, and compulsory assimilation simultaneously – as had been the intention. The results of the competition are not determined by the well-meaning planning of the board but by the way the participating young people set about it. The competition is ill-suited as an instrument for influencing public opinion; it is more of a barometer, registering and clarifying existing convictions and endeavours on the part of the up-and-coming generation. This degree of autonomy of the young people is intentional and constitutes the real strength of the pupils' competition. Entries showing hostility towards foreigners were few in number. One fact that ought to be criticized, however, is that the complexity of the problem was often inadequately grasped and thought out, and conclusions therefore remained on a global level. Even so, on the eve of "European freedom of choice of domicile", part of German youth offered convincing evidence of growing tolerance and balanced reflection. Hopefully, elements of this will

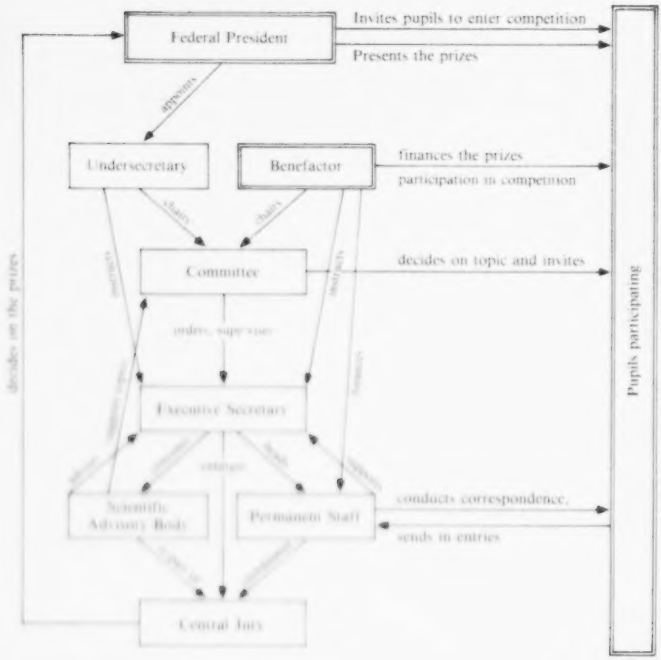
find their way into public consciousness and practical politics.

All in all, the pupil's competition and "Today's Problems on the Test Bed of Historical Experiences" should and can be continued. Even now, however, it is possible to foresee or attempt to figure out which burning questions of a social nature will require particular historical reflection: How has the generation gap been solved and new-age groups been integrated into society? ("Youth and Old Age"). In what way has the relationship between the sexes changed and what deficits in regard to equal rights still have to be overcome? ("Men and Women"). How did people formerly deal with physical ailments, and how did they organize their attempts to cure them? ("Health and Sickness"). What kind of experiences were gained during wars and what attempts were made to contain conflicts and to minimize armament? ("War and Peace"). These and similar questions could well be the topic for the next competition . . .

4 Institutions and procedure

The "Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's German History Prize" is neither state-run nor private, neither an out-of-school nor a mere school activity. In fact, it has no clear status; it is more of a "social event" within the fabric of loosely-knit and in many ways informal cooperation. This organizational form is not easy to define but is nevertheless effective and flexible. The interlacing of state and private activities in the case of a public and social assignment is something of an exception in German tradition. Examples of similarly sponsored activities with the unequivocal involvement of state authorities tend to be found more in Anglo-Saxon countries. Even the competition procedure – like its content – represents an example of the pluralistic view of democracy.

Organization of the Pupils' Competition



4.1 Federal President and benefactor

The foundation of the pupil's competition was the result of a meeting between Federal President Gustav Heinemann and industrialist Kurt A. Körber. Together they developed the fundamental idea and then signed an agreement; the revised version of 1976 still constitutes the basis of the pupils' competition. In the change of office to Walter Scheel (1974-1979), Carl Carstens (1979-1984), and Richard von Weizsäcker (since 1984), the respective new Federal President's undersecretary has each time assumed responsibility for

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The architects: Federal President Gustav W. Heinemann (left with his wife) and the Hamburg benefactor Kurt A. Körber. They founded the pupils' competition in 1973. Dr. Körber – as an engineer a historical layman – came up with the decisive idea: pupils should explore the history of their locality themselves. From this original idea developed the largest, coordinated lay research movement in the Federal Republic of Germany.

the agreement. Both founders shared the view that commitment to public responsibilities and democratic co-determination could not do without unconventional paths, private initiatives and non-official procedures. Moreover, the character and conveyance of historical views in a democratic society cannot be left solely to the authorities. The search for evidence must be shifted to the sphere of responsibly-minded citizens.

According to the Constitution, the 1949 Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, the powers vested in the Federal President are very few. He is occasionally referred to as a mere "state notary" because, as the supreme representative of the state, he "executes", "puts into force" numerous

acts (laws, appointment of ministers, exchange of ambassadors, appointment of judges) but does not "rule". Furthermore, as an organ of the Federal Constitution, he has no right to intervene in the affairs of the Länder (constituent states). The rights and powers of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany – following the belated fusion into a national state (1867/71) and the negative experiences of a central state under the National Socialists (1933-45) – are, however, clearly defined. Federalist thinking and federal structures are very much alive in the Federal Republic of Germany.

One of the important tasks, which is the sole preserve of the Bundesländer, is cultural policy, the administration of education and cultural affairs, e.g. schools and higher education institutions. Responsibility for this sector rests with the eleven ministers of education in the elected governments of the Länder; these are controlled by the Länder parliaments (state legislatures). Even responsibilities requiring elementary coordination between the Länder, which are absolutely essential for the freedom of movement and homogeneous living conditions (such as the organization and length of schooling, mutual recognition of final certificates), do not lie within the powers of the Federal Government and the German Bundestag. To achieve coordination, the education ministers have set up their own body, the "Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder" (KMK) in Bonn. It is based on the principle of unanimity and the obligation to reach agreement: in other words, no-one can be outvoted.

Despite the Federal President's lack of political power and his two-fold lack of competence in regard to schools and teaching, his actual ability to exert influence is quite considerable. Over the years, the person and office of the Federal President have steadily grown in moral and statesman-like authority. Like the king in a constitutional monarchy, the Federal President is above the political parties and therefore can give his opinion on things which are thought-provoking and moving, promote things which are necessary and un-

comfortable, without having to heed short-term interests or narrow-minded reservations, but also without offending large parts of the population, of course.

From Theodor Heuss (1949-59, FDP), the first Federal President, via Gustav Heinemann (1969-74, SPD), the founder of the competition, to Richard von Weizsäcker (CDU), the present office-holder (since 1984) – all have given important speeches, particularly on historical commemoration days and have thus helped to promote reappraisal of the past and express the German people's will to peace and reconciliation. Speeches of this stature, not least the one given on the 40th anniversary of the end of the war on 8 May 1945, aroused considerable attention both at home and abroad. Consequently, there is no doubt that, although not legally defined, it is nevertheless acknowledged that particularly the field of reflection on and learning of history is legitimately within the Federal President's area of responsibility. With the utmost tact, but also with great determination, the balance between the representative and innovative duties of the supreme office of state has been sought and found.

Fruitful cooperation developed between the politically responsible Federal President Gustav Heinemann and the socially committed benefactor Kurt A. Körber. The benefactor does not just guarantee the financial means which, for a historical citizens' initiative, are not available in the Federal President's budget. The Federal President does not just assume patronage of the competition, i.e. lend it his name and reputation. It was much more a fusion of ideas which were ideally matched: Heinemann's support for local research of the German Freedom Movements and Körber's idea of a pupils' history competition on the basis of explorative learning.

Körber, a trained engineer, has built up a large group of firms on the strength of his numerous mechanical engineering patents. This highly innovative entrepreneur with social ideas caused something of a sensation at an early date by introducing a co-determination model, i.e. employee participation in the appointment of superiors. For quite some time now he

Donator Kurt A. Körber and his commitment to the competition:

The German History Competition is now ten years old – this confronts me once more with the question: what prompts a person from the manufacturing industry to commit himself to such a large extent to the promotion of historic-political education? If, on the occasion of this modest anniversary, I render an account to myself for this, three different aspects must be considered. First of all, I am firmly of the opinion that engineers and entrepreneurs who successfully organize technical progress, must not be indifferent to cultural and social developments. In this sense, I have always regarded myself as an inventor and instigator also of social innovations, e.g. the Bergedorf Discussion Circles, model facilities for the elderly, promoting the theatre sector.

As in the case of so many activities, coincidence also played its part in the invention of the pupils' competition. This is the second aspect. Through the purchase of a library filled with precious documents from the 1848 revolution, I got into conversation in 1973 with Gustav Heinemann, the then Federal President, on questions of historical consciousness. Heinemann's wish to strengthen libertarian traditions in the picture of German history impressed me, and I suggested that within the framework of a competition pupils should explore such traditions wherever they happened to live. This marked the birth of the pupils' competition. I had never concerned myself with questions of history didactics at that time and perhaps, because of this very fact, this idea was able to develop in a modest way into just what history teaching wanted.

Today, our culture and society – this is the third aspect – need the institution of the pupils' competition even more than they did ten years ago. The pupils' competition offers an opportunity of showing young people by means of historical research and assessment, how to weigh up current problems critically in each case and to cope with them rationally, compromisingly and enriched by historical experience. In view of the manifold current crises, the pupils' competition is thus making an important contribution to the social integration of young persons. For this reason it must time and again take up new problems which move young persons and our society, and, in this way, elevate new areas and aspects of history into the consciousness of the general public

(From '10 Jahre', 1983, 5)

has been transferring a substantial part of his profits to the "Körber-Foundation" and distinguished himself culturally and politically through its projects. Particularly the "Bergedorfer Gespräche", a forum for exchange between politics and industry, science and culture, as well as between home and abroad, have, as a place of encounter on an informal basis and for tentative exploratory discussions, repeatedly contributed to the initiation of political relaxation or innovations.

Through donations made by Dr. Körber, a substantial part of the enterprise now belongs to the foundation. Its activities are being constantly expanded or revised. They are directed, for instance, at a model senior citizens' centre, diverse cultural work and a "Promotive Prize of European Science". Without wishing to belittle the importance and prestige of these activities, it might be said that the "Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's German History Prize" has assumed a central position in the foundation's activities. The funds have also increased quite substantially. For the first (annual) competitions, the costs came to around DM 500,000 per year; in the meantime the annual budget (with prize awards every two years only) has reached nearly DM 1 million.

4.2 Committee and education ministers, advisory body and permanent staff

Unlike other competitions, the Federal President is not just a symbolic "patron" who executes the awarding of the prizes without having real influence; he is also one of the permanent co-organizers. Continuous cooperation between the President and the benefactor is realized by means of a "Kuratorium" (a committee or board) where the planning assignment for the formulation of a topic is given and the final version of the competition wording decided on. The chairman of the committee is always the current undersecretary at the Federal President's Office (in other words, the Federal President's "right hand") and the benefactor is the vice-chairman. The

committee is the actual decision-making instrument for the pupil's competition; it appoints and at the same time controls the executive secretary.

Two undersecretaries delegated by the "Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs" belong to the committee as well. They represent the interests and wishes of the Bundesländer with Christian Democrat or Social Democrat governments. The committee also includes public figures from the public mass media, for example, from the Federal Central Office of Political Education, the science of history, and the teachers' associations. The acceptance of a topic (be it "The 1918/19 German Revolution", "Living Accommodation in the Process of Change", "Everyday Life under National Socialism", or "The Environment has a History") by the public and the academic sector, education authorities and teaching body, is of crucial importance for the success of the competition.

Once a topic and a precise formulation of assignment have been formally approved by the committee, the individual education ministers are once again asked to give their support. If competitors can complete their project outside school, the consent of the (school) inspectorate is not required; this applies to pupils and teachers who act as tutors in their spare time. It is a different story, however, if whole classes or courses participate in the competition using their school lessons to work on their respective projects, i.e. in the case of highly desirable school projects. Here, varying degrees of assistance are provided. Some of the education ministries make participation voluntary or recommend it, provided the compulsory learning objectives and learning material in history lessons have been realized in compliance with respective "directives or curricula".

Many education ministries actually go much farther: in a more or less explicit manner they permit deviations from the official requirements regarding learning material in favour of the competition. In some cases they quite possibly release teachers (wishing to act as tutors) from part of their normal

classroom commitments. They provide special assistance for archives activity by seconding teachers as "archive pedagogues", for instance. They send recommending circulars to all schools and teachers. In isolated cases, there has been no lack of criticism of the subject matter. Only once in the last 16 years did one Bundesland not give its official support to the competition: this affected participation by pupils from this state but did not prevent it. All in all, the flexible model of basic consensus and pragmatic cooperation have proved well able to function in this field, too – despite partial differences of opinion.

For further conceptual development and production of ideas for the competitions, the executive secretary of the pupil's competition has set up a "Scientific Advisory Body" which, at the present time, consists of 10 men and women. One-third come from the academic history sector, one third from the history didactics sector and one third from schools. These experts work on a secondary basis for the competition but can bank on sympathy and support by their employers (schools, higher education institutions, research institutes) as well as occasional leave of absence. This basic number of 10 is increased in line with requirements in each individual case. The Scientific Advisory Body has three principal tasks: every two years, after carefully weighing up various possibilities, it suggests a topic to the committee. Then – at the behest of the committee – it prepares this topic (or another if so desired by the committee) for a concrete competition. Finally, it forms the core of the central jury for the assessment and selection of prizewinners among the pupils' entries received.

The responsibility for the whole procedure lies with the permanent professional staff under the direction of the executive secretary. He undertakes the conceptual preparation of the topics, is wholly responsible for contact with competitors and tutors, elaborates work guidelines or aids for each individual competition, maintains close liaison with press, radio, TV, and publishers, takes care of all publications, deals with the interchange with all relevant institutions, keeps comprehensive

registers and archives, organizes journeys and conferences, looks after local and central jury activities, awards book and other meritorious prizes etc.

The present permanent staff consists of the executive secretary, two female academics, two secretaries, and – at peak periods – temporarily employed students. The competition depends entirely on the high professional standard and full-time commitment of the permanent staff; although all other honorary staff involved give of their time obligingly and in good measure, they cannot possibly have an overview of all the individual tasks and complicated sequences of dates or reliably coordinate all the countless details.

4.3 Tutors and archivists

Competitors can, of course, work entirely without tutors. Three 19-year-old pupils from Class 13 may have possibly won a prize under tutelage two years previously and can now get together independently, establish the main point of emphasis in their project, seek out a circle of interviewees, e.g. from the old people's homes, evaluate printed source material, e.g. the local press volumes in a large library or whole rows of files totally on their own, formulate their findings, and win a good prize with their entry. But this is not the rule. Most individual competitors avail themselves of the greater experience of adult experts. Teachers (not only of history) make up the bulk of the tutors; parents, clergymen, youth-group leaders, students, and archivists, on the other hand, assume the role of tutor to a much lesser degree.

Tutorial activity can be highly varied – from drawing pupils' attention to the competition and distributing entry forms, via help in developing the topic and establishing personal and technical contacts, via the deciphering of manuscripts and preparing of translations, to assistance in structuring, interpreting, and formulating. It is not unusual for mother, teacher or the school secretary to type the fair copy in

Tutor (male)
Klaus Möller

'I have found out that the pupils need the tutorial help. Firstly, they need it to approach the subject. It isn't enough just to put the topics booklet in their hands and say: 'The assignment is in there. See how you get along with it'. One must give them real assistance in the selection of local history subjects since, as a rule, the pupils are more familiar with German than with local history. Secondly, the competitors need support in practical matters: where can I get the cheapest photocopies made, how long will producing the fair copy take etc? Thirdly, the tutor must also organize financial assistance, such as for travel costs and photocopying. Fourthly, the tutor has to give a word of encouragement now and then, provide contacts, accompany them when they start their research and when they go for contemporary eyewitness interviews – simply open doors here and there.

And then there are also personal grounds why I commit myself time and again to the competition. For one thing, I'm interested in local history, and for another, it is always a special experience to see the way the pupils grow with their assignment. They often work their way into a subject with incredible energy and develop undreamt of powers and skills. It is encouraging to observe all this, particularly when one recalls how it began.'

(Spuren suchen, Heft 1, 1988, 27)

Tutor (female)
Dr. Erika Richter

I think particularly the work on projects which are encouraged by the competition offer schools a great deal. The creativity of the pupils is called for and promoted more intensely than it is in normal classwork. In past competitions, it has always cost me much personal involvement and thought to be able to keep the class on the same level of motivation over a longer period of time. This was no problem with the young ones. On the contrary: they were so strongly motivated that it was more a question of slowing them down. The children really got involved and this reflected back on the teacher. The mutual joy in the project linked teacher and pupils, and so it was no problem, for instance, to hold extra lessons at school. It was a meaningful challenge for the junior level pupils to be confronted with the question: What did it look like here formerly? The subject 'environment', in particular, was ideally suited to concerning oneself with the past, present and future and to recognize the correlations. I would like to encourage the organizers to continue the inclusion of the younger pupils in future competitions.

My work with senior pupils on water problems in our region showed me that there is a wealth of source material which needs to be further elaborated for questions about environmental history. The history of the environment could then be integrated quite easily into the classroom work – something I would particularly welcome. If the respective relevant chapters existed in school textbooks or volumes of source material, standard subjects such as 'The Role of the Associations in History and Politics' – taking farmers', industrial and water reservoir associations etc. as an example, could also be dealt with from environmental viewpoints.

The commitment displayed by countless tutors is that 'extra something' in the competition. Why do teachers sacrifice so much time and effort? Here are two personal accounts.

the final instance. It goes without saying that the type of help given differs greatly according to the number and age of the pupils. In the case of a senior pupil, two planning sessions, a list of literary sources, and advice on the formal aspects of citing quotations might suffice.

For a Class 3, it will be essential to establish or try out before each phase of the project whether the learning step involved is achievable and productive; in other words, preparatory consultations and facilitating measures are indispensable. Despite all creativity and originality of younger children, in particular, encouragement, help and correction will always be necessary. The technical involvement in the completion of the project must not be underestimated here to ensure that the young children's craftsmanship and the joy in their own, finished product are readily apparent.

The type and extent of tutorial assistance must be stated in the entry submitted; the areas concerned, for instance, include "use of archives", "eye-witness interviews", "procurement of literature", "structuring", "formulation", and "manner of citing quotations"; the extent is indicated by "much", "average", "little", or "none". It is difficult to check these self-assessments. Some pupils possess astonishing qualifications whilst other groups have not yet mastered the same technical and analytical skills and need expert and practical advice. What is of much greater importance is the question of educationally "admissible" (i.e. productive) and "inadmissible" (i.e. harmful) tutorial help. It is inadmissible, for instance, for a young female teacher to submit her "state examination paper" (i.e. a scientific treatise for her degree examination) or an older male teacher his ready-to-print local history study (embellished with a few pupils' photos) as the competition entry for their classes.

On the other hand, it is admissible for a female teacher to spend far more time helping to complete a collage by her pupils than she would have spent preparing her own documentation. Competitors must be able to see the final result as their own plan and achievement, their own learning path, and their

own language; this is the whole educational and technical crux of the competition projects: the pupil must feel secure in the product itself. Then the extent of help given is a question of pragmatics, tact, learning level, style. A book – nine-tenths of the entries are in the form of self-written and illustrated "books" – may well be the property of a whole class but may still have been "co-produced" by the teacher in many respects (indeed, be all his book). Prohibited are purely adult interpretations which are drafted above the heads, hearts and hands of the pupils.

Inadmissible assistance by tutors in this sense rarely occurs. Probably more frequent but less infuriating is an understatement in regard to the extent of tutorial help. Conversely, the jurors regret the fact that tutorial influence is too weak or too one-sided in many of the entries. In particular, pupils are sometimes not advised or guided intensively enough in their choice of a solvable part-assignment, in the delimiting of their project. Especially younger competitors often work unspecifically and miss the crucial point of the particular assignment of a local, detailed study based on "sources". With relatively little effort, a tutor could prevent this form of "topic transgression". Usually, though, the assistance afforded by tutors is neither inadmissible nor inadequate, nor is it concealed by the competitors.

On the contrary: without the readiness of hundreds of history teachers to provide occasional or regular help, the pupil's competition could not achieve what it actually does. As in the case of the competitors, there are also a number of highly effective, i.e. successful "recidivists" among the tutors. Some of them keep encouraging the intensive participation of a whole school for many years and lead their clientèle from success to success – up to the coveted "Federal President's School Prize" for the most successful school overall. Since this fame – including possible publication of anthologies of the award-winning entries of a school – falls to the lot of the institution, and not merely to that of the pupils, the tutors emerge slightly from their anonymity – something which is

Classroom work with original documents at the Northrhine-Westphalian State Archives, Detmold

The quality of many competition entries would be inconceivable without help from the archive educationalists.

normally characteristic of this submerged and selfless form of educational activity.

The archivists are no less important. At best – and by no means seldom – they act as tutors, except that they are more

specialized in keeping files and records and somewhat more biased towards this source group. At worst, they deny access to the desired documents or cannot find them – although material is available. The tradition and training of archivists are not particularly attuned to accepting children or young persons as normal users of archives. Consequently, the "threshold fears" experienced by both sides have had to be overcome in the last 15 years so that – in addition to professors and regional researchers – 13-year-olds can also feel at home in archives. Great importance must be attached to the opening-up of archives as a place for actively learning history under the guidance of archive tutors.

The technical and legal difficulties must not be underestimated. Records of the last 30 years have often not been put in the safekeeping of archives and are normally inaccessible to users. Many records of much older vintage relating to specific persons (e.g. court records) are subject to protection against the misuse of personal data in data processing, i.e. handing them over to young persons would be inadmissible. In other cases, anonymization is required in their usage. Older records are largely written in "Gothic" script, characters which have been abolished and which are completely unknown to the younger generation. Many of the users do not succeed in deciphering them: archivists, parents and teachers occasionally help with transcriptions. Finally, the questions raised in the announcement of the competition run crosswise to the classic organizational structure of authorities, and thus the regulations governing archive records. As far as the archivists are concerned, considerable ingenuity is called for; their participation in the intensification of the project seems desirable to ensure the acquisition of conclusive material.

The circle of archivists not only includes the full-time custodians of state and municipal archives. A large number of pupils depend more on records held by church parishes, schools, commercial enterprises, families, or private collectors. These, as a general rule, are not being taken care of by professional archivists – which, incidentally, are also lacking

in smaller communes. In these cases, in particular, the extent of the helpfulness and intensive advice given is often impressive; the conflict of interests may also be as conspicuous. Whenever delicate questions are asked regarding the activities of a community or firm under National Socialism, regarding the destruction of the environment or the treatment of fellow-citizens, who are foreigners, the readiness to provide information is often very limited and the inclination to paper over undesirable events and facts or to let sleeping dogs lie marked. As a consequence, in many of the pupils' projects most of the time is spent on running time and again into stony silence and allegedly lost records. It is difficult to establish just how far these assertions are true in each case. Occasionally, legal action has been successfully taken to achieve the handing-over of records. Archive administrators, in the widest sense, are ensnared in serious conflicts: it is highly desirable that they make the younger generation's need of information the maxim of their actions in a more resolute way.

4.4 Regional juries and central jury

About 1,000 entries are submitted per competition. Their length varies from one page to 1,000 pages. Since the average length is probably in the region of 60 pages, some 60,000 pages of text and pictures, as well as exhibitive panels or video documentations and many hundreds of taped interviews must be reliably assessed and the prizes awarded fairly. Consequently, because of the requirements and the time and energy involved, the adjudication procedure is not the least part of the competition. The procedure is vested with a series of controls and compensating mechanisms and takes the better part of six months. Following a meeting of the experts, detailed assessment criteria are established on the basis of the "philosophy" of the competition and the formulation of assignment, even before the entry deadline. As a result, a

four-page "assessment sheet" and an extensive commentary of almost 40 pages is published.

In the initial stage, all entries are preliminarily assessed by "regional juries" – which number 19 at the present time. Each has to deal with an average of about 50 entries. This procedure has a two-fold purpose. It is not only intended to provide the permanent staff and the central jury with a measure of relief but also to ensure that experts concern themselves with the local history projects who are familiar with their own region and the historical research conducted there. The members of the jury are, for the most part, teachers from various types of schools as well as others, e.g. university professors and archivists. The jurors suggest the prize category for each project – or weed out those not considered worthy of an award. One of the regional jury's most important, additional tasks is to arrange the best entries from their area in order of merit.

The entries are then all sent back by the regional juries to the Hamburg permanent staff. Here, a "plausibility control" is carried out, in particular, regarding those entries which are considered to be either "non-assessable" or not "worthy of an award". If any doubt arises in regard to a negative assessment or exclusion, these entries return to the pool of those to be further examined and are included among those for further consideration – a sort of "Hoffnungslauf" (a procedure which offers a possible ray of hope once more). In general, however, the preliminary assessments by the regional juries are very reliable and realistic. Even so, there have been isolated cases where crass misjudgements have been adjusted upwards or downwards by the central jury (which gives some point to the "Hoffnungslauf"). "Incorrect assessments" by the central jury cannot be ruled out – but there is no possibility of further adjustment in such cases.

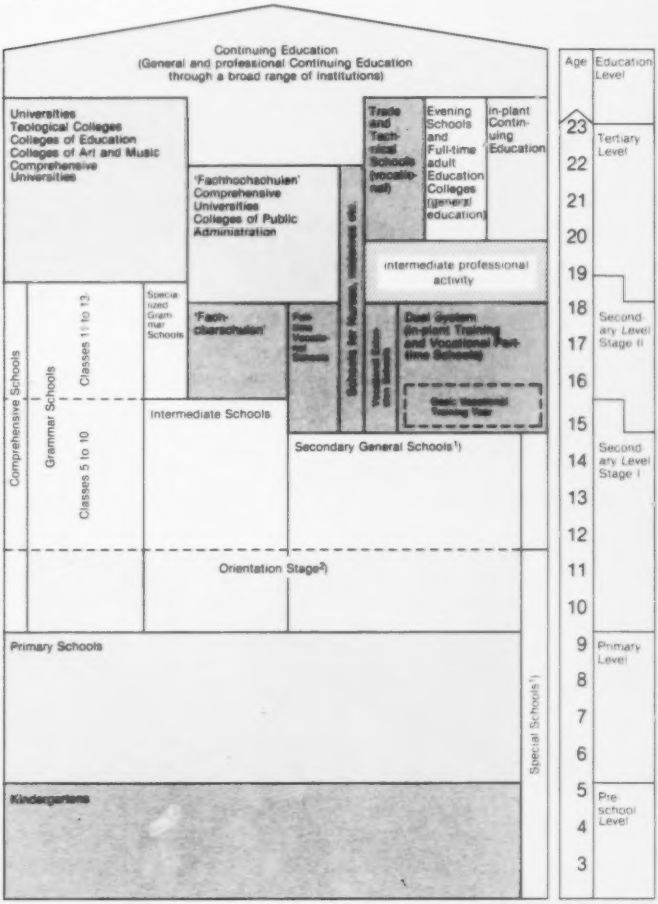
All entries which have been recommended for one of the first five prize categories or by the Hamburg staff for "re-consideration" are divided up and despatched to the members of the central jury to be read and assessed at home. This

means that there are at least two assessments per entry when the central jury commences its deliberations. The jury itself consists of about 15 to 18 members; for this purpose, the Scientific Advisory Body is augmented by the co-option of several more experts on the topic in question, such as historians dealing with environmental history for "The Environment has a History" or migration researchers for "Our Town – a Home for Foreigners?" Care is taken to establish a balance between teachers, didactics experts, and academic experts. The central jury works a six-day week day and night, alternating between repeated reading sessions, discussions, and consensus decisions.

It calls for considerable communicative and organizational effort to seek out the five best entries from around 60 recommendations for first prize, to reduce the 200 recommendations for first to third prize to the available 45 places etc. The jury's decision is final and irrevocable with no recourse to legal proceedings. Even so, the assessments have to be justifiable at a professional and a pedagogical level – and be able to stand up to expert criticism. Especially because of the ambitious and broadly-spanned requirements, the weighing-up process, in regard to content and objectivity, is more difficult than merely reaching agreement.

How can a scientific discourse by a highly-gifted 20-year-old girl student – which could be accepted as a doctoral – or at worst – a M.A. thesis be compared with a handcrafted entry by 9-year-olds from a Class 4 at primary school? How much more may be expected of a class of 13-year-olds at a Gymnasium (grammar school) than from a similarly-aged class (with poorer scholastic qualifications) at a Hauptschule (main school)? How can allowances be made for the disadvantages enjoyed by a vocational school class which attends school just once a week or a mere 6 weeks full-time a year? How can a project based entirely on interviews be assessed in comparison with an interpretation of records yellow with age? To what degree can the extent of youthful naiveté and lack of source-material criticism or ideological criticism by three

Basic Structure of the Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 1987



[1] About 30 per cent of pupils in Secondary General Schools attended an additional tenth school year.

[2] About 73 per cent of pupils in the fifth and sixth school years attented the Orientation Stage.

[3] There are also special schools at the intermediate, grammar and vocational school levels.

- Diagramm of the basic structure of the education system in the Federal Republic of Germany:
  There are slight differences within the individual Länder.
- Figures in the right column show the earliest possible age of entry for uninterrupted progress through the education system.
- The size of the rectangle is not proportional to the numbers attending.

15-year-olds, working without a tutor, be excused? To what extent should "inadmissible" tutorial help be taken into account? Which levels of performance are suited for primary school children as opposed to secondary school levels? Where are pupils' interpretative and assimilating achievements to be found in a collage? To what extent, in a continuous portrayal, must statements be corroborated, the sources identifiable and documented? How can entries with highly differing main points of emphasis and the resultant problems in handling them be fairly and properly weighed up? All these problems of jury-work occur cumulatively.

What seems insolvable theoretically, has, in fact, worked out well in practice. Just under a quarter of the entries come from Secondary Level II (16 years and upwards), almost half from Classes 8 to 10 (13 to 16 years of age), and about one-third from Classes 3 to 7 (8 to 12 years of age). The senior level at Gymnasien (grammar schools) by no means monopolizes all the prizes. Pupils at Realschulen (intermediate schools) and Hauptschulen (main schools), from Secondary Level I of Gymnasien and Gesamtschulen (comprehensive schools), pupils from Grundschulen (primary schools), Sonderschulen (remedial schools), students and vocational school pupils, account for a slightly smaller proportion of prizes than of entries. The younger ones, who can still have another "go" in two years' time, win many of the lesser prizes and books. No group is neglected. Care is taken, particularly in the higher prize-categories, to ensure that there is a pronounced balance of opportunities. Although there is no official system of "quotations", all jury members have a good idea of what is fair and proper in their heads. The large number of entries permits – to a high level of certainty – the identification of the very good, the excellent, and the absolutely outstanding achievements within the various sub-groups.

The Environment has a History (1986-87)

Competitors according to Bundesland (constituent state)

Bundesland	absolute	percentage	Comparison: percentage of population
Baden-Württemberg	447	8.9%	15.2%
Bavaria	469	9.4%	18.0%
Berlin	87	1.7%	3.1%
Bremen	103	2.1%	1.1%
Hamburg	190	3.8%	2.6%
Hesse	339	6.8%	9.1%
Lower Saxony	1,130	22.6%	11.8%
Northrhine-Westphalia	1,645	32.9%	27.3%
Rhineland-Palatinate	337	6.7%	5.9%
Saarland	186	3.7%	1.7%
Schleswig-Holstein	71	1.4%	4.2%
federal wide	5,004	100%	100%

Prizewinners according to Bundesland (excluding junior prizes)

Bundesland	absolute	percentage
Baden-Württemberg	254	10.7%
Bavaria	229	9.6%
Berlin	38	1.6%
Bremen	80	3.4%
Hamburg	146	6.1%
Hesse	111	4.7%
Lower Saxony	340	14.3%
Northrhine-Westphalia	878	36.9%
Rhineland-Palatinate	180	7.6%
Saarland	86	3.6%
Schleswig-Holstein	37	1.5%
	2,379	100%

(Press file 'Umwelt hat Geschichte', 13. Oktober 1987)

The War Years in Germany (1982/83)

Distribution of entries and prizes (including book prizes) according to type of school

Type of school	Entries in %	Prizes in %	Competitors in %	Pupil population in %
Gymnasium	63.07	65.58	56.8	32
Intermediate School	14.60	11.38	16.5	21
Secondary Modern	8.68	6.51	15.7	37
Vocational School	5.54	5.15	5.5	10
Comprehensive School	3.25	3.79	3.3	
Remedial School	0.76	2.17	0.4	
Miscellaneous	2.00	0.81		
Non-pupils	1.14	2.44	1.8	
Unspecified	0.96	2.17		
	100	100		

(Year Book 'Die Kriegsjahre in Deutschland' 1985, 43)

'Our Town – A Home for Foreigners?'

Distribution of entries according to age-groups and class levels

	Entries	%
Class 1 / about 6 years old	0	0.0
Class 2 / about 7 years old	2	0.0
Class 3 / about 8 years old	26	2.7
Class 4 / about 9 years old	77	8.0
Class 5 / about 10 years old	68	7.1
Class 6 / about 11 years old	56	5.8
Class 7 / about 12 years old	64	6.7
Class 8 / about 13 years old	136	14.2
Class 9 / about 14 years old	168	17.5
Class 10 / about 15 years old	143	14.9
Class 11 / about 16 years old	77	8.0
Class 12 / about 17 years old	106	11.1
Class 13 / about 18 years old	36	3.8
Total	959*	100

* The remaining entries cannot be classified under any class level

(Compiled by the permanent staff in Hamburg)

5 A piece of living, committed historical culture

The competition is by no means finished and done with once the prizes have been awarded. It continues to interest – intensively – the general public and to give the staff at the Hamburg office work to do. In the interest of historical culture, the problems surrounding the topic in each case and, not least, the publicity for the competition, it must be ensured that the results are disseminated by the mass media and made available to research. To this purpose, "Findbücher" containing resumés of all prizewinning projects are prepared. All contributions are accessible for secondary evalutation by educational science and historical science. They are all archivized at the Körber Foundation in Hamburg – except those from the first three competition years which are kept at the Memorial of German Freedom Movements in Rastatt. The Findbücher are sent to all West German archives where they may be consulted at any time. All projects can also be looked at on the Foundation's own premises or in the visitors' room at any archives. Under the rules of the competition, all entries and the rights of usage pass into the possession of the Körber Foundation. This facilitates use and publication juridically.

Publication of excerpts is permitted – generously and free of charge – in newspapers, periodicals, and books on local background, permission is also given for duplication for personal use, anthologies, or books. A considerable number of the competition contributions obtainable in bookshops or published for the grey market of "papers" have accumulated over the last 15 years. There are dozens of papers on the subject of "National Socialism" and "Environmental History", for instance. The Foundation itself has had compact and popular presentations prepared, firstly through a "Pupils' Competition Year Book" for the subjects of "Living Accommodation in the Course of Change" (1979), "After-work Hours and Leisure Time in the Course of Change" (1981), "Everyday Life under National Socialism 1933-1939" (1982), and "The War Years in Germany 1939-1945" (1985). In recent

times abridged versions of pupils' entries have been published in the more informal shape of a magazine entitled "Spuren suchen": "The Environment has a History" (No. 1, 1988) and "Our Town – a Home for Foreigners?" (No. 3, 1989).

It would, however, be too narrow a concept to restrict dissemination to "one's own products". To encourage greater public discussion on the respective topics and provide the competitors with more information on working opportunities, the permanent staff in Hamburg initially distributed scientific books ("Gelbe Reihe", published by Verlag Peter Hammer) and later published "teachers' booklets" with hints or working methods, and finally, diverse "Material for Tutors" (and pupils). In the case of environmental history, a small handbook has been published which is much used even by historical science. "Von Abwasser bis Wandern. Ein Wegweiser zur Umweltgeschichte" (From Sewage to Walking. A Guide to Environmental History, 1986). Of late, detailed suggestions and working methods have been directed at the pupils themselves and likewise published in issues of the magazine "Spuren suchen" – for the first time in "Our Town – a Home for Foreigners?" (No. 2, 1988).

Reports are welcome in daily, weekly, and monthly publications, radio and TV programmes and are promoted through diverse media contacts and detailed press releases. Especially on completion of the projects and after the awarding of the prizes, many things start to happen without involvement of the permanent staff in Hamburg. Schools, prizewinners, tutors, and mayors all ensure that the local press and regional radio stations take notice. Even a fourth or a fifth prize can have quite an impact locally. Political reactions (such as the erecting of a memorial, clarification of an environment scandal) are not rare. Naturally, they are shown great attention by the regional mass media.

Quite early on, group trips abroad were also among the pupils' competition prizes; nonetheless, international recognition remained modest initially. It was only the entries on National Socialism and World War II which initially aroused

Alltag im Nationalsozialismus

Vom Ende der Weimarer Republik bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg

Sonderauflage der Körber Stiftung

Herausgegeben von Detlev Peukert und Jürgen Reulecke

Peter Hammer Verlag

1

Sozialgeschichte der Freizeit

Herausgegeben von Gerhard Huck

Peter Hammer Verlag

2 Social History of Leisure Time

Fabrik Familie Feierabend

Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte des Alltags im Industriezeitalter

Herausgegeben von Jürgen Reulecke und Wolfhard Weber

Peter Hammer Verlag

3 Factory, Family, Free Time

Zwischen Befreiung und Besatzung

Analysen des US-Geheimdienstes über Positionen und Strukturen deutscher Politik 1945

Herausgegeben von Ulrich Borsdorf und Lutz Niethammer

Peter Hammer Verlag

4 Between Liberation and Occupation

A group of prizewinners visiting Israeli President Navon„ 1981 (From '10 Jahre', 1983, 13)

great interest beyond the borders and prompted exhibitions and encounters. Slowly it began to emerge what significant effects the competition was able to create in other countries and in the interest of linking nations – despite its confinement to "German History" which, incidentally, has never been regarded as too narrow and xenophobic.

Countless contacts were established with foreign organizations after the "The Environment has a History" competition (1986/87); it was followed by a similarly-styled competition in Austria, for example. The findings of "Our Town - a Home for Foreigners?" will undoubtedly make their way into neighbouring and distant lands. This can be prophesied with certainty in the knowledge that hundreds of children from other countries took part in the parallel competition for repatriates entitled "Foreign in Germany". They write in a

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Titles of special editions published by the Peter Hammer Verlag, Wuppertal:

Bat denket Ui dodrüwer?

In seaum niggen Johre gieret doch allerlei Üwerraskungen. Man is jo eauk niggemärsk und möchte allerhand wieten. Dat beträcket siek owwer ments op dean Einzelnen. Niu was owwer amme dürren aisten in der Tuidunge te leasen, dat Meskere, use Meskere, am Enge det leßten Kruiges imme Johre 44 en Konzentratieaunslager, ne Zweigstelle van Buchenwald, hat härre. Wenn dat seau weasen wör, dann härren vui Meskeder doch wat dovan wußt. Und bo sall dat denn stohen häwwen? Iek was domols hui op deam Wehrmeldeamt, dann härre vui doch bestimmt wat wußt van SS-Einheiten. Vui harren ments dai Landesschützen hui, und dai wören all freau, wenn man se in Rugge lait. Iek maine niu, wenn man seauwat behauptet odder in dean Rium stellet biu de Frau Dr. Richter, dann söll man doch der Saake aist mol genau nohgohn. Wenn man üwer einen Mensken bat Schlechtes vertället, dann blitt doch immer wat hangen dovan, wannet eauk nit wohr is. Niu iset doch bui user Stadt datselwe. Dai Jugend mot doch denken, bat vui allen Meskeder doch för schlechte Mensken weasen sind, bo vui nie dovan vertallt hät. Iek worte all van jungen Meskedern derümme anraupen. Seau kann doch ne ganze Stadt in Verraup bracht wearen, und dütmol neau use Stadt. Et weart van lutwärtigen seauwat oppen Disk bracht, ümme siek vlichte interessant te maaken, oder bat denket Ui dodrüwer?

haro.

'Wrapped up in dialect', this attack on local competitors appeared in the 'Stadtanzeiger' (local newspaper) in the small town of Meschede in 1982

What do you think about it?

In a new year such as this, there are all sorts of surprises. One is also inquisitive and wants to know all kinds of things. But this refers mainly to individuals. But what did we read in the newspaper on the first day of this year – our Meschede is supposed to have had a concentration camp, a branch of Buchenwald, in 1944, at the end of the war. If this had been the case, we Mescheders would surely have known about it. And where was it located? I was here, at the local recruiting office, at the time. We would certainly have known about SS-troops. We only had local defence troops here and they were only too glad to be left in peace. Now then, when someone like Frau Dr. Richter maintains or alleges something of this sort, then she ought to investigate the matter thoroughly, in the first place. If something bad is told about someone, some of the things said keep clinging, even if it isn't true. The same applies to our town. Young persons are bound to think we elderly Meschede citizens are bad people not to have

told them about it. Young persons have phoned me up for this reason. In this way a whole town can be brought into discredit – this time our town. Something like this is brought up by outsiders to make themselves interesting maybe – or what do you think?

refined manner about their experiences in Germany, criticize many things, and frequently long to return to their second (sometimes first) home in the Federal Republic of Germany. Even foreign classes, such as in France, participated.

The "Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's German History Prize" has met with much praise and approval: but there has been criticism, too. Local disputes were inevitable. Survivors or their descendants felt unjustly attacked. Localities felt their reputation had been damaged or their tourist trade threatened. Firms repudiated accusations and communities rejected suspicions of their wanting to paper over their past. Clashes of this nature are unavoidable if "explorative learning by young people" is to be taken seriously and tried out. One cannot want responsibly-minded citizens, on the one hand, and start practising this responsibility with children and young persons, only to be outraged at the audacity of adolescents, every time they nonchalantly go beyond the bounds or every time they discover some unpleasant truth.

As long as those affected approach their differences of opinion fairly and communicatively, and do not attempt to silence competition participants by resorting to instruments of power or allegations, public controversies resulting from competition entries are just as much a part of pluralistic, historical culture and the settling of differences as the competition itself. Despite isolated and unpleasant experiences on the part of pupils, processes of this nature have, for the most part, probably provided important political experiences and helped promote democratic steadfastness (indeed, resistance). In this connection, the involvement of the Federal President and his

moral authority (plus broad public recognition) benefited the committed young persons.

Be that as it may, the competition as a whole has not been spared critical assessment. Individual educational voices have stated that the demands made on "explorative learning" are generally excessive. History specialists seem to fear that the general public is presented with an over-naive picture of a history researcher's work; extremely delicate problems surrounding interpretation of a linguistical or ideology-critical nature, or syntheses based purely on theory and related to society in general, are unacceptably oversimplified. Serious questions must indeed be asked in regard to interview technique, in particular, and the degree of critical assimilation of the information gained by the pupils. Sceptics of "oral history", and especially its advocates, agree that it does not represent the royal road to history, is unfit for the answering of many questions and needs to be used in a methodically highly sensitive manner. This is where the deficits of "adolescent researchers" are particularly conspicuous.

Whilst such exhortations were being presented argumentatively and in a spirit of solidarity, there were other voices of a rather destructive and defamatory nature. Particularly during the competitions on National Socialism, several persons (anonymous for the most part) wrote directly to the Federal President, to the press, and to individual competitors. In a more or less sharp tone they refused to have "immature young persons" (in their opinion) "take it upon themselves" to pass judgement on the past and on possible misdemeanours of the older generation. Not infrequently this was linked with a justification of the Nazi era and a rejection of an – alleged – "orgy of self-humiliation" since that time. The letter-writers ranged from the national-conservative right-wing to the undeniably neofascist fringes of society.

These critics partly failed to recognize and partly refused to accept the general tendency of the competition. They cannot reconcile themselves with the fact that historical consciousness ought not be arbitrarily decreed by the authorities or national-

SCHÜLERWETTBEWERB DEUTSCHE GESCHICHTE
UM DEN PREIS DES BUNDESPRÄSIDENTEN

ALLTAG IM NATIONALSOZIALISMUS

VOM ENDE DER WEIMARER REPUBLIK BIS ZUM ZWEITEN WELTKRIEG

Poster for the competition. Subject: Everyday Life under National Socialism – From the End of the Weimar Republic to the Second World War

istically instrumentalized, but that it should be elaborated independently with a critical approach to sources. They reject the enlightening, fundamentally democratic, basic position itself. Here, it must be made abundantly clear that the pupils' competition is loyal to the constitution but not to the government. It points to the need for criticism and opposition, rationality and humanity, the protection of progress and the clarification of tradition.

The practice of holding this pupils' competition is neither megalomaniac nor perfectionist. Of course, many of the "adolescents'" entries present rash, naive, and one-sided interpretations. Adults' statements are often accepted and uncritically or abstract moral principles and hollow formulae offered as conclusions; that, of course, is normal. The lack of reflection certainly does not exceed what is uttered at numerous "regular meetings at the pub" or even published in commentaries in local newspapers. Nevertheless, the pupils' competition offers the frequently-used opportunity of developing personal, further-reaching thoughts on the basis of better information.

The shortcomings and deficits result directly from the strong points. Since the committed pupils or apprentices compile their history themselves, they also determine the quality of the results themselves. The committee, advisory council, and office staff, tutors and archivists only perform a sort of midwife's duties. The competition cannot be better than the research, analytic skill, and historical reflections of the competitors themselves; certainly, it spurs them on to greater progress in learning but is not a sort of Archimedean attempt to radically change historical consciousness.

In the outstanding entries, the young persons reveal achievements which even many experienced teachers regard as simply impossible from the outset. Time and again, observers, who, with no previous experience of the competition entries, compare them with the usual products of conventional classroom teaching, are overcome with speechless astonishment. Such enthusiastic appraisal does not apply to the broad average,

As far as pupils are concerned, a competition is not only linked with success but also with much time and effort. Why do so many of them accept these sacrifices then? This is what 20-year-old Dirk Rumberg from Dachau, who participated three times, has to say about it:

I think I really must be mad: I spend all my free-time (and even have to skip a few lessons occasionally, just before the deadline) preparing my competition entry: I read, seek, interview, compare, write. Why? What for?

First, it's a personal challenge I confront to work continuously on one project for a long time; the question is whether I can see it through. Then, of course, there is, above all, a pleasant alternative to school lessons where everything is served up bite-sized and one is supposed to swallow it without giving it much thought (this applies to all subjects, not just history). Here, on the other hand, I am obliged to procure all information myself and forced to classify it myself. The difficulties start with the procurement already. There are archivists who obviously regard the documents they have in safekeeping as their private property. I am learning to become persistent, negotiate my way through all the official channels and finally examine the documents despite the protection of personal data and privacy (which, I feel, provides a welcome pretext to prevent or at least hamper contemporary history research).

Once the material has been gathered, there is the question of presentation, classification, assessment, evaluation. The evaluation, the assessment, is undoubtedly the hardest part of the whole competition; it gets more and more difficult the more I know about the era of National Socialism. Regarding major matters the facts are quite clear, but when it comes to the smaller things, everyday life. Can I condemn them – the followers, the opportunists – who lived in a totalitarian state of injustice at that time? In my opinion, it can no longer be a question of condemnation – for me, what has happened belongs to the past. What is important is the question of today, tomorrow – and this cannot be accomplished simply with a few pious phrases which could be heard around the time of the brilliantly marketed 50th anniversary of the 'seizure of power'. Particularly through the competition work, the people I got to know as a result, through the history I researched, I have learnt not to heed words but to take deeds as a measure. In this case, a deed would be for example the erection of an international youth centre in Dachau.

All in all, independent reflection, acting on my own responsibility, which I have learnt, the people I have met and the important criticism I have heard – this alone, apart from the possibility of winning a prize – was reason enough for me to enter the competition.

(From '10 Jahre', 1983, 17)

however. The majority tends to reflect the present state of consciousness: it serves more as a diagnostic instrument for stock-taking purposes.

As a genuine pluralistic event, the pupils' competition cannot and does not want to impart or indoctrinate a specific ideology; its object is to offer an experimental field for testing oneself and for historical exploration. Confrontation with historical documents relevant to the presence and with conflicting opinions about history can, in the long term, generate a process of growing autonomy. Specific thematization, forming one's own thoughts, expressing oneself in one's own words, are an important experience. If the results and conclusions gained in an initial attempt prove unsatisfactory, this by no means represents failure or even justifiable grounds for moral debasement.

With its approach of "explorative learning" the pupils' competition cannot revolutionize historical consciousness, turn history teaching upside down, or rewrite school textbooks. Its broad impact is too limited for this. It is more a laboratory belonging to history didactics and an experimental, social dialogue on history. Having to memorize prefabricated textbook formulations is replaced by learning situations with a serious character and history one can grasp. As a consequence, within a multi-voice discourse, it represents an important and independent contribution to reformed school textbooks, project-oriented teaching and reflected historical consciousness.

The author

Prof. Dr. Bodo von Borries, born in 1943, obtained his doctorate in social and economic science. Originally a Gymnasium (grammar school) teacher, he became professor of educational science (specializing in history teaching) at Hamburg University in 1976. He has published several books and numerous essays, mainly concerned with women's history, colonial history and environmental history, the analysis of school textbooks, historical films, television plays and non-fiction books, novels, qualitative and quantitative, empirical and theoretical research into the awareness and learning of history. Prof. von Borries has, for many years, been a member of the Hamburg Jury, the Central Jury and the Scientific Advisory Committee for the "Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's German History Prize".